the weekly Standard

AUGUST 18, 2003

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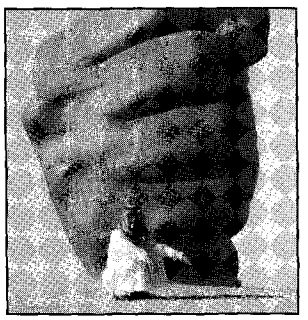

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Ashcroft Vindicated Again

The campaign to "free Mike Hawash" sputtered to a halt last week. Hawash is a former Intel engineer who has been widely portrayed as the victim of a Bush administration anti-Muslim witch hunt ever since the FBI picked him up in a parking lot outside his Oregon workplace last March. Hawash was held as a material witness to an al Qaeda conspiracy for five weeks before being charged as a member of that conspiracy. Shortly after he was detained, his former Intel boss Steve McGeady launched a publicity offensive on behalf of his friend, whom McGeady described as a prisoner in "John Ashcroft's war on our Constitution."

In most respects, this campaign was a huge success. The media were quite receptive to the idea that Hawash was being held because he conformed to a "stereotype set up by the Justice Department to vilify Mike and other Arab-Americans," as McGeady put it. You can get a sense of just how receptive reporters were by perusing the vast array of clips at *freemikehawash.org/coverage/index.htm*.

But a funny thing happened on the way to Hawash's martyrdom: He pled guilty to one of the conspiracy counts against him. Last week, as part of his plea agreement, Hawash admitted that he set out for China in October 2001 in an unsuccessful attempt to enter Afghanistan with a group of men known as the "Portland Six." They were, he testified, "prepared to take up arms and die as martyrs" fighting for the Taliban against the United States. Moreover, Hawash said he "knew what he agreed to do was a violation of the law."

The group, financed in part by Hawash, were hardly unsuspecting dupes. To get into the fight, they flew first to Hong Kong and then to Urumqi in western China, where they caught a train to Kashgar, hoping to cross into Pakistan and then Afghanistan. Failing in that, they took a train to Beijing, where they applied for visas from the Pakistani embassy, which turned them down. At that point Hawash returned to his wife and kids in Oregon. As a result of his plea, he will serve up to 10 years in prison and will assist the government in its prosecution of the men who traveled with him.

In May, McGeady wrote to the *Oregonian*, "If Mike Hawash is ultimately convicted of a crime, he should be held to account like anyone, but I would rather sacrifice my own credibility in his support and look a fool if he is guilty" than have him "emerge months from now, exonerated but friendless." Too bad for McGeady that his friend wasn't worthy of such loyalty. ♦

The Arianna Agenda

Millionaire populist and author Arianna Huffington, whose dinner parties enlivened Gingrich-era Washington, jumped into the race for governor of California last week. She contributed a memorable piece to these pages in the fall of 1995, urging Newt, who was then her political lodestar, to consummate his revolution by running for president. But he didn't take the advice, and she didn't stay in his camp. By the late '90s, she had moved so far left that Warren Beatty had become her ideal candidate. Now she has finally decided to cut out the political middlemen and run her own campaign.

On Wednesday morning, Arianna told Californians that "American politics is broken—controlled by a powerful elite using its financial clout to set the political agenda. Our representative republic has been replaced by the dictatorship of the dollar." In the free-for-all that the Gray Davis recall has become, and as the only red-haired, Cambridge-trained celebrity debater in the race, she commanded the headlines for several hours. Then Arnold Schwarzenegger jumped in, trumping her celebrity factor by an order of magnitude.

Happily for Arianna, the race should still prove a terrific opportunity to test-drive the themes of her upcoming book, *Fanatics and Fools*. The fanatics, by the way, are Republicans; the fools are Democrats. Nobody, on the other hand, has ever accused Arianna of being a fool. In late May, *Variety* reported that she was paid in the low seven figures for the book by Miramax, with whom she is also working "to develop a television show." No doubt the publicity value of a pseudo-campaign for governor will prove to be considerable. ♦

Fake Tocqueville: It's Back

Nearly eight years ago, in the early days of this magazine, Claremont McKenna professor John J. Pitney Jr. first called attention to the most overused bogus quote in American politics: the platitude, falsely attributed to Alexis de Tocqueville, that "America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great."

Devotees of THE SCRAPBOOK will recall that for years this page has waged a valiant—if unsuccessful—war to purge "fake Tocqueville" from our national discourse. The list of politicos who have deployed the quote is long and bipartisan, but the abuse of Fake Tocqueville reached its peak during the administration of Bill Clinton, whose

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use of it was, like so much else in his life, promiscuous. Since Clinton left office, uses of the quote (probably the concoction of a 20th-century ghostwriter) have mostly been confined to obscure op-eds and over-earnest letters to the editor.

But it's campaign time again, and Fake Tocqueville has made its first official appearance of the 2004 presidential race. The summer 2003 issue of the communitarian journal *Responsive Community* reprints a May 19 campaign speech by Sen. John Kerry titled "Reviving the Ideal of Citizenship," which Kerry kicked off this way: "Visiting this nation more than 150 years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that America is great because Americans are good." Kerry isn't just using the ersatz quote, he's misquoting it. Not only does Fake Tocqueville refuse to die; it mutates! ♦

CIA MIA

When Congress released the unclassified version of its report on the terrorist attacks of September 11, the headline stories were all about "missed opportunities" and Saudi complicity. The only hero in the story, it seemed, was George Tenet, the CIA director, who, as early as 1998, had "declared war" on al Qaeda but whose efforts were frustrated by an administration and bureaucracy that didn't take the threat posed by bin Laden seriously. Or so we're told. Yet buried in the 858-page report are two notable findings that call into question just how serious Tenet himself was about waging that war.

On page 59 of the report, for example, the congressional investigators conclude that intelligence analysts assigned to work on the issue were "inexperienced, unqualified, under-trained, and without access to critical information." And then, on page 388, the report notes that CIA's counterterrorism officers told the Joint Inquiry that "before September 11 the CIA had no penetrations of al Qaeda's leadership, and the Agency never got actionable intelligence."

So, let's see—the analysts were second rate and our spymasters had not recruited a single important source within the ranks of the terrorists. What war was Tenet waging, anyway? Given those facts, it's easy to understand why the Pentagon wanted to set up an office to review and query what the CIA was feeding it. ♦

League of Hypocrisy

The Arab League pitched a fit last week over the new Iraqi governing council. As the *Washington Post* noted in an editorial aptly headlined "Comic Relief in Cairo," the 22 members of the league "declined to recognize the new council, on grounds that its members were . . . not elected by the Iraqi people themselves. . . . As the league's Secretary General Amr Moussa put it in Cairo, 'The council is a start, but it should pave the way for a legitimate government that can be recognized.'"

"By this standard," the *Post* pointedly observed, "the league would have 22 empty chairs. Not a single country in the entire Arab world has a government that enjoys the sort of democratic legitimacy the league now demands of the Iraqi council." ♦

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Casual

Doing Nothin'

Last night, strolling at dusk in the small town where I'm vacationing, I passed a half-dozen 14- and 15-year-old boys. Some were walking, some were balancing jerkily on their bikes, struggling to coast at walking speed. They all had that weird adolescent gift for remaining unintelligible while shouting at the top of their lungs. ("Hey, Tyler! *Hey!* Hey, Tyler!" one said to a friend walking so close that their arms were brushing. "Yo!" said another, scarcely further away. "Hey! Hey, Brandon, yo! Know what?")

If no information could be gleaned from eavesdropping on these kids, it may have been because they had none to impart. Probably all of them had had identical conversations with their parents roughly twenty minutes before:

"Where are you going, Brandon?"

"Nowhere."

"Are you going to see your friends?"

"I dunno."

"What are you going to do?"

"Nothin'."

But they *are* doing something. With a few adjustments (e.g., that my friends had names like Bill and Mike), they are doing exactly what I used to do. They're *hanging around*.

It heartened me to see it. I had assumed hanging around was a lost art. By the time I was doing it in the late 1970s, it was already giving way to "hanging out." Sometime during the sybaritic 1990s, hanging out was replaced in turn by mere "hanging."

Of these, "hanging around" has the worst reputation. This is partly because it was practiced in the two or three decades after the juvenile delinquency panic of the 1950s. Like many such panics, this one abated at just the moment its worst fears materialized. American parents dropped their guard and became less "repressive" in precisely the years teenage drug use reached its all-time high. (Basically the years I spent in high school, although I deny sole responsibility.)

Hanging around was sometimes shorthand for "hanging around, shoplifting, spray-painting walls, and drinking till you throw up." But not always. The dispute into which hanging around fell came mostly from a residual Calvinism on the part of adolescents themselves. To describe oneself as "hanging around" is to admit that there are better things one could be doing, like organizing one's fellow hangers-around into activities more dignified than hanging around. In the battle against boredom, hanging around was a declaration of surrender by one's "inner resources." We conceded as much when we described ourselves as "just" hanging around.

Darren Gygi

But then hanging around turned into "hanging out." This was the same activity, but with claims to social dignity and respect. No one ever said he was "just" hanging out. Maybe hanging out = hanging around + a driver's license. But at the time it felt like an alternative lifestyle, with all the privileges accruing thereto. To hang out was to present oneself in public, to open oneself to experience, as opposed to locking oneself in a room, reading a book, or replicating the "sell-out" lives of one's parents.

There was a catch, though. While hanging out had connotations of countercultural defiance, it did *not* offer teenagers an escape from the Calvinist bargain. It demanded constant self-justifications, along the lines of: "Who is to say that my father's work as a pediatric brain surgeon is more socially valuable than my smoking this excellent ganja and getting my 15-year-old girlfriend pregnant?" or "When you look at how little my father enjoys selling insurance, you have to wonder who's *really* crazy, John Wayne Gacy or him."

Nothing is more exhausting than casuistry in a losing cause. So in the end, "hanging out" ended the way most American alternative lifestyle movements do—its practitioners decided to maintain all their claims on society, while repudiating all their duties. Effrontery was pressed into service where casuistry had failed. That's how we arrived at "hanging," as the term is used in rap music, teen movies, and beer ads. ("Whatcha doin'?" . . . "I'm hangin'.") Hanging means idling, preferably in front of the TV, alone if necessary, waiting for other people to buy you clothes.

There were signs of hanging in the crowd I passed last night—the mind-boggling conformity of their dress, for one—but I took them for hangers-around. Perhaps this is wishful thinking. Perhaps it is extrapolating from the very youngest people I work with, who, in their leisurely moments, seem to be more hangers-around than hangers, generally more virtuous and diligent than the people who came before them—certainly more virtuous and diligent than my generation. Whether or not they have learned from the mistakes of their elders, they have arrived at the conclusion that we must hang around together or we shall hang separately.

Christopher Caldwell

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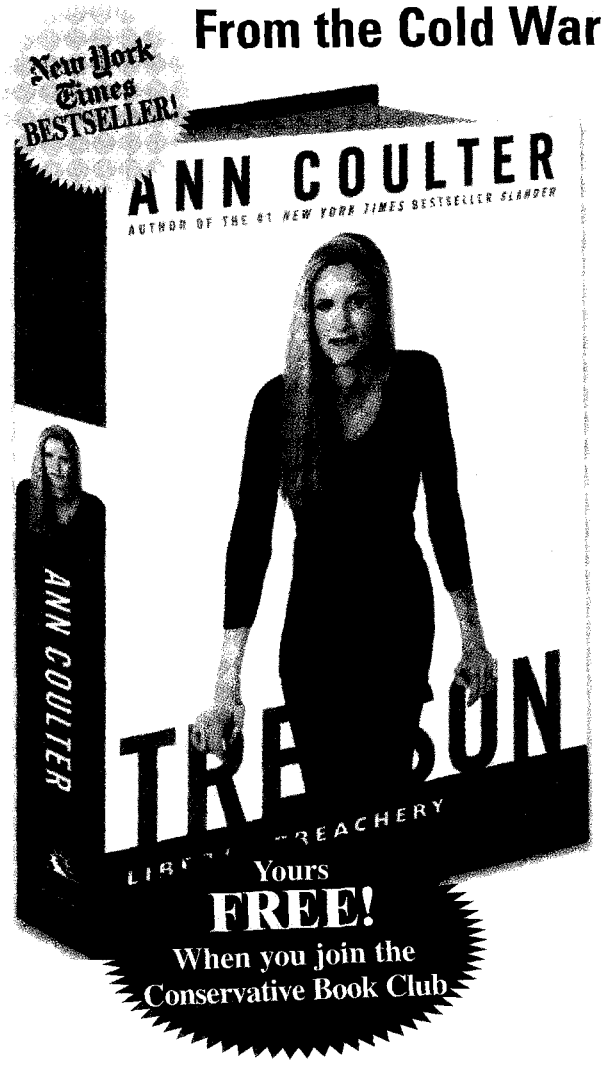
From Ann Coulter: a blistering exposé of liberal treachery against America

From the Cold War to the War on Terrorism



In this stunning follow-up to her #1 *NY Times* bestseller, *Slander*, leading conservative author Ann Coulter insists that liberals leave foreign policy decisions to conservatives. In *Treason*, Coulter contends that liberals have stood with the enemies of American interests in every major crisis from the fight against Communism to today's war on terrorism. Re-examining the 60-year history of the Cold War and beyond—including the career of Sen. Joseph McCarthy, the Hiss-Chambers affair, Ronald Reagan's face-off with Mikhail Gorbachev, the Gulf War, the Clinton impeachment, and Operation Iraqi Freedom—Coulter reveals the Left's shameful record of blindness to, and active cooperation with, the forces of totalitarianism and terror.

"Whether they are defending the Soviet Union or bleating for Saddam Hussein, liberals are always against America," writes Coulter. "They are either traitors or idiots, and on the matter of America's self-preservation, the difference is irrelevant. Fifty years of treason hasn't slowed them down."

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Sucker-Punch

I HAVE TO TAKE EXCEPTION to William Kristol's "Bush Suckers the Democrats" (July 28). Had President Bush said he took responsibility for the State of the Union's contents, rather than acting like others of his yuppie generation and passing the buck to someone else, that would have been the end of the "phony scandal." What made President Reagan great, by comparison, was his willingness to take responsibility.

The only valid statement by the yapping left was that of Congressman Gephardt, who compared President Truman's "the buck stops here" approach with President Bush's "didn't happen on my watch" reaction. As a lifelong Republican who first voted in 1952, I'm fed up with that buck-passing style of management, be it in government or in the corporate environment.

I greatly fear President Bush's management style will lead to Hillary Clinton's election in 2004. As Dick Morris has accurately pointed out, Hillary has probably figured out President Bush is vulnerable. Also, Hillary has undoubtedly figured out that with his "good heart" style, President Bush will have no clue about how to run a campaign against the Clintons and their attack machine. My prediction is that in 2005, President Bush will be named the new baseball commissioner, a job he can handle from Crawford, Texas, and one that requires little more than his telling us that baseball is great for America.

JOHN A. DEGROAT
Landenberg, PA

AS WILLIAM KRISTOL SUGGESTS, difficult decisions are made in times of war. During World War II, Japanese Americans were interned in what is now regarded as a regrettable response to a war thrust upon us. Likewise, in the wake of 9/11, some of the rationale for deposing Saddam *might* have been based on faulty intelligence. So what? There was no shortage of reasons for removing the Iraqi dictator from power, and Americans understand the world is a safer place without him.

It's wrong for Democrats to challenge every decision made in the fog of war. Not only does the president now have to worry about threats from abroad, but he also has to worry about the challenges he will face from Democrats desperate to regain power in Washington. Democratic efforts will only serve to paralyze the president while leaving America vulnerable to future attacks. Not a smart strategy for taking the White House, especially for the Democrats, a party already weak on national defense.

THOMAS M. BEATTIE
Mount Vernon, VA

TERRY MCAULIFFE'S statement, quoted in William Kristol's "Bush Suckers the Democrats," that "This may be the first time in recent history that a

president knowingly misled the American people during the State of the Union address," is false.

The last president had more than his share of untruths in big speeches. My favorite: In the January 23, 1996, State of the Union, Bill Clinton solemnly proclaimed, "The era of big government is over."

LARRY G. DEVRIES
Eden Prairie, MN

Miller Right

ANYONE WHO WATCHED KDKA television in Pittsburgh in the 1980s will not be surprised by Dennis Miller's recent display of his conservative colors ("Miller's Crossing," July 28). Back then, as he does now, Miller regularly skewered any incidents of idiocy that came to his attention, with no regard for the political party or social standing of those involved. I have always enjoyed his humor and lack of political correctness. Twenty years ago, one of the hosts on KDKA, Patrice King, was left either speechless or laughing loudly at Miller's comments and film clips. Things haven't changed much since then.

RHONENA HOYET
Chillicothe, OH

German Lessons

IN LESLIE LIEBL'S "Germany Was Not a Piece of Cake" (July 28), she neglects to mention that credit for the *wirtshaftswunder* (economic miracle) of West Germany must be granted to Ludwig Erhard, the finance minister, who chose free market capitalism over socialism in 1948. To realize the extent of damage that the war and 13 years of Nazi mismanagement did to the economy, one must note that it was not until 1956 that German farmers ceased the practice of hoarding food. Mismanagement of Iraq has been going on for 35 years. Despite their oil resources, it will probably take the Iraqis at least as long as it took the Germans to raise their economy to a self-sustaining level.

The issues in Iraq are different from those in postwar Germany, but no less profound. Before the Iraqi success story can be written, however, many political and economic decisions must be made, which is why it is critical that the United Nations stay out of Iraq. Instead, the United States must be allowed to create a classical liberal political economy.

JAMES BILEZIKIAN
Miami, FL

Mountain Madness

MORMONS TEND to be conservative, so it's a good bet that quite a few of them read THE WEEKLY STANDARD. It's also a good bet that they've been angered by Bill Croke's credulous

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review of Sally Denton's *American Massacre* ("Bloody Utah," July 28).

To Mormons, Brigham Young was more than a great leader and church president. He was a prophet of God, and the man who saved the cause after Mormons had been slaughtered and chased out of New York, Ohio, Illinois, and Missouri.

But to others, Brigham Young committed the capital crime of treason against the United States. As for the Mormons who journeyed thousands of miles to (then desolate) Salt Lake City to escape persecution, Denton writes that they were engaged in "the most successful socialist experiment in American history."

Bill Croke approves of Denton's case without a word of criticism or analysis. He assures us that we will believe Denton, and not current church president Gordon Hinckley, when it comes to the question of Brigham Young's culpability.

Shouldn't *American Massacre* have been subjected to a little scrutiny, or at least put in context? The Mormons were, for all practical purposes, at war with the United States when the massacre occurred. They've turned out to be pretty good citizens, and they aren't known to be particularly bloodthirsty. Mormons aren't exactly socialists, either. What Mormons were trying to do in the nineteenth century, in barren Utah, was survive. They succeeded spectacularly.

ROBERT S. GARRICK
Clayton, MO

NAZIS GET RELIGION

JACK FISCHEL'S REVIEW of *The Holy Reich* ("Nazi Pulpits?" July 28) is an interesting and for the most part accurate account of my book. However, I would like to point out some oversights in his concluding paragraphs. When Fischel asks, "Does the fact that many Protestant clergy supported National Socialism make National Socialism a Christian movement?" and implies the answer is "no," he overlooks precisely that which is new in my book—exploring what the Nazis themselves had to say about Christianity and its relation to their movement.

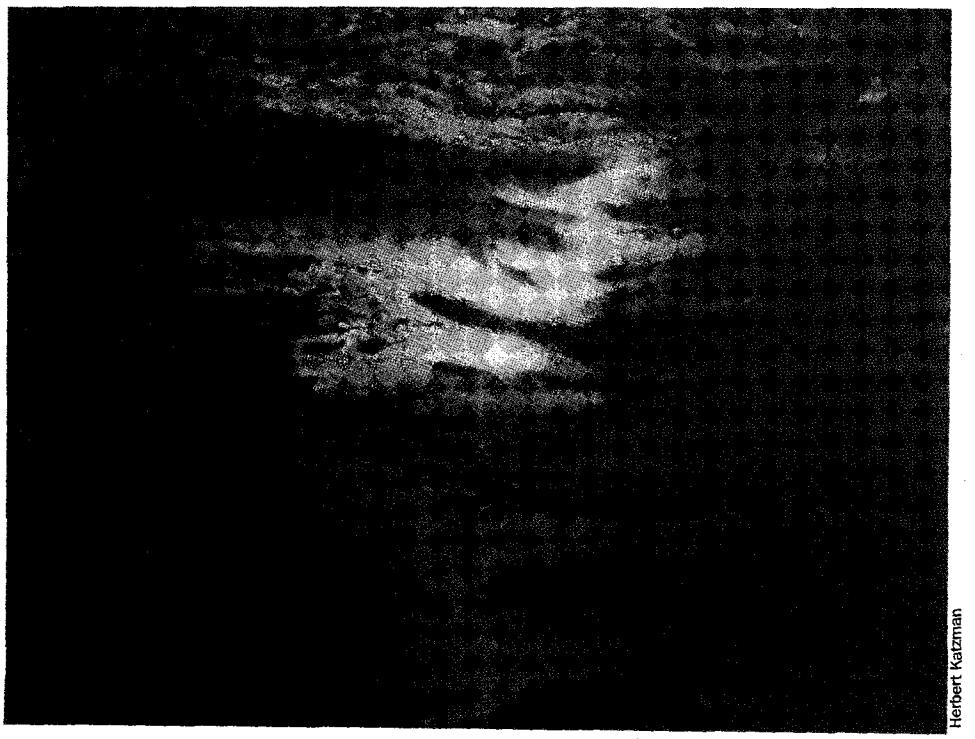
While it does explore the views of Christian clergy, *The Holy Reich* is not primarily concerned with what they had to say about Nazism, if only because we already know so much about this subject. Rather, it interrogates the notion that the Nazis never reciprocated the affections of Christian clergy, and finds this notion to be false. When, as Fischel points out, the KKK similarly claimed (as they still do) that their movement was Christian, it is not simply because they had the outside endorsements of Christian clergy, but because Klansmen on the inside insisted on this themselves—and not just for public consumption.

Much more problematic, however, is Fischel's claim that I need to "undertake serious theological work" to back up my arguments. It is a puzzling assertion, given my extensive exploration of the varieties of Christian theology that existed in Germany at the time, and which varieties Nazi religious thinking most closely resembled. It is not simply a question of most forms of Christianity perpetuating the old canard of the "Christ-killing Jews" in ways the Nazis found highly congenial. Much more importantly, among a particular variety of Christian—the so-called "Culture Protestants"—voices were heard that called for the complete removal of the Old Testament from the Protestant canon before the arrival of Nazism. As heretical as this idea seems to us today, its leading advocate was no one less than Adolf Harnack, widely regarded in Christian circles still as one of the great Protestant theologians of the twentieth century. Fischel's claim that "the Nazis altered fundamental Christian doctrine," while certainly reflective of the conventional wisdom, needs to be rethought in light of the very considerable attention I give to the theological precedents of the Nazis' conceptions of Christianity.

RICHARD STEIGMANN-GALL
Kent, OH

RIGHT SIDE UP

BECAUSE OF a production error, Herman Katzman's "Glorious Sky, N.Y. Bay, 9/4/01" ("Art at Sea," July 28) was printed upside down. It is reproduced below as it should have appeared. ♦



Herbert Katzman

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An Independent Palestinian State

Would it be a peaceful neighbor of Israel or would it lead to war?

President Bush, prodded by the "international community" and in order to appease the Arabs, who are furious about our war against Iraq, has designed a "Road Map" for the Middle East, aided by the "quartet" of the U.N., the European Union and Russia. At the end of that road, presumably in 2005, an independent Palestinian state would arise as a peaceful neighbor of Israel.

What are the facts?

An aura of inevitability. The concept of a Palestinian state, which has by now acquired an aura of almost inevitability, is a fairly new and quite unjustified one. It is unjustified because there are no distinct "Palestinian" people—they are the same Arabs as those of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. The concept of a Palestinian state came about after the Six-Day War in 1967. It is the product of unrelenting Arab propaganda and insistence. A Palestinian state never occurred to the Ottomans who ruled the area until their defeat in World War I, nor to the British when they had the mandate over Palestine until 1948, nor to the Jordanians who ruled the "West Bank" from 1948 to 1967. George Bush (father) declared "...In accordance with U.S. traditional policy, we do not support the creation of an independent Palestinian state." It is therefore difficult to understand why his son, our current president, would declare that it was "...a vision of longstanding U.S. policy to create a Palestinian state west of the Jordan River."

The thought that a Palestinian state next to Israel would be a peaceful neighbor is ludicrous. The stated purpose of the Arabs, endlessly repeated and never excised from their "covenant," is to acquire whatever territory they can, in order to use it as a base for the final assault against the Jewish state and for the hoped-for extinction of the hated "Zionist entity" once and for all. Even ten years after the ballyhooed Oslo Accord, the Palestinian Arabs still proclaim that "Palestine" would extend "from the river to the sea," which means that Israel would cease to exist, would be destroyed and absorbed by the new "Palestine." The State of Israel does not exist in Palestinian or any other Arab school books or on their maps. Tel Aviv does not exist. The Jewish holy places do not exist. The "West Bank" and Gaza are only the first step. They want it all!

"Palestine" demilitarized? Many, even those who concede the unrelenting hostility of the Arabs, contend that Israel would be in no existential danger from a Palestinian state because it could be made a condition of its creation that it be demilitarized, for a number of years or perhaps even forever. But those who propose that, know better, of course. Even today, as the Palestinians are under the severe weapons restrictions that they accepted in the Oslo Accord which allowed only a police force with light weapons, they have artillery, rockets, missiles and all kinds of heavy weaponry that they have smuggled into their territory. A ship laden with 50 tons of deadly weapons was intercepted by Israel in the Red Sea. Many shipments of arms have been intercepted in the Mediterranean; and there is a steady influx of arms through secret tunnels from the Sinai, which, in quest of peace, Israel has foolishly ceded to Egypt.

> House Majority leader Tom DeLay put it well when he said, "I can't imagine this president supporting a state of terrorists... The peace plan is a road map to destruction."

But the heavy weapons that "Palestine" would inevitably acquire, despite all solemn covenants to the contrary, aren't really necessary. With an independent Palestine in control of the Judean ridges, and with Israel only nine miles wide at what would be its narrow waist, heavy weapons would not be required to make life impossible in the truncated and mortally vulnerable Jewish state. Katyusha rockets, one of the Arabs' favorite weapons, would cover virtually all of Israel—impeding civilian life, industry, civil and military aviation, and, in case it came to that, mobilization of troops. The one million Arabs living in Israel as Israeli citizens would be a convenient and deadly fifth column, ready to spring into action. Israel would, of course, respond to any such attack. That would inevitably result in a major war, a war that would ultimately set the entire region on fire and would undoubtedly involve weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear ones. How can the world, how can the United States possibly promote such a project—a project likely to bring untold disaster to the world?

The Arab world is presently comprised of twenty-two states of nearly five million square miles and of one hundred forty-four million people. The greater Islamic world contains forty-four states with one billion people. Israel, with five million people, is smaller than Lake Michigan, smaller by half than San Bernardino County in California. There seems to be no need for another Moslem/Arab state, especially one that would certainly serve as an advance base for the ultimate destruction of Israel, the state of the Jews. How the President would promote the creation of a terrorist state, a state that without question would become a mortal enemy of the United States, and how he would countenance the inevitable destruction of the Jewish state, the only loyal ally of the United States and its only strategic asset in the area, is incomprehensible. House majority leader Tom DeLay put it well when he said, "I can't imagine this president supporting a state of terrorists... The peace plan is a road map to destruction."

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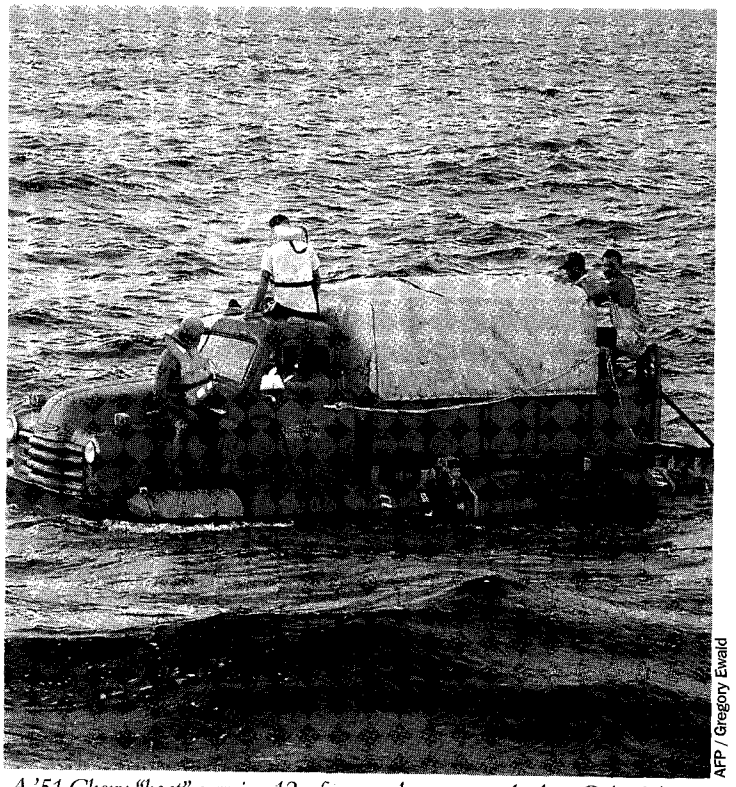
the weekly Standard

Cuba Libre

"President Bush is the most pro-democracy, pro-freedom president on Cuba that we've ever had," says Emilio Gonzalez, who recently stepped down as the National Security Council's expert on Cuba. Maybe so. Bush has vowed to block any attempt to repeal the trade embargo against Cuba. He's transformed the American interest section in Havana into a proactive spearhead for supporting Cuban dissidents. Bush raises the Cuba issue when he meets with European and Latin American leaders. He's recruited the European Union to campaign for human rights in Cuba, and he's persuaded Europeans to invite Cuban dissidents to events at their Havana embassies, infuriating Fidel Castro. He's backed Osvaldo Paya, the Cuban human rights leader and recipient of the E.U.'s Sakharov Prize who met recently with Secretary of State Colin Powell.

But there exists an appalling gap in Bush's policy toward Castro: the treatment of refugees escaping Cuba. Bush has continued the refugee policy of the Clinton administration known as "wet feet, dry feet." Under it, a refugee is sent back to Cuba unless he or she gets a foot on dry American land. This has led to wrenching scenes on Florida's shores of Cubans struggling to reach the beach—and potential freedom—as U.S. Coast Guard personnel battle to keep them in the water. Most refugees, of course, never reach American soil. In July, a dozen Cubans who'd stolen a boat were grabbed by the Coast Guard miles off the Florida shore and, following negotiations with the Cuban government, were returned to Cuba, only to face 10-year jail sentences. Bush officials regarded this as a victory of sorts, since three Cubans trying to reach the United States last spring suffered an even worse fate. They were caught by Castro's forces and executed.



AFP / Gregory Ewald

A '51 Chevy "boat" carrying 12 refugees, who were sent back to Cuba July 16

This refugee policy is the result of an agreement between President Clinton and Castro. It caused Elián Gonzáles, who'd been rescued at sea, to be seized from a Miami home and flown back to Cuba. Under it, 20,000 Cubans are allowed to emigrate annually, with Castro deciding who goes and who doesn't. Castro uses the quota as a tool for suppressing dissent. If a Cuban is docile, he may have a chance to leave. But if he presses for freedom in his homeland, his chances are nil. To get out, a Cuban must pipe down. Castro deals with dissidents in other brutal ways. He cracked down on dozens last spring and sentenced them to long jail terms. Meanwhile, their family members lose jobs, their kids are expelled from school, and they lose their homes.

Why is the Bush administration clinging to a Clinton policy that's a matter of presidential discretion, not federal law? Five words: fear of another Mariel boatlift. In 1980, Castro cleaned out his jails and insane asylums and sent a flotilla of some 125,000 refugees to Florida. The sudden influx created some havoc in Miami and even in Arkansas, where violence and rioting by Cubans held at Fort Chafee contributed to Bill Clinton's defeat for reelection as governor. If you've seen the movie *Scarface*, which starred Al Pacino as a refugee who becomes

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a crazed cocaine dealer, you'll understand the trouble that Castro caused in the United States. Averting a repeat of Mariel is the governing principle of Bush's refugee policy.

Yes, Castro is quite capable of mounting another boatlift. But the question is whether Bush should allow this fear of another Mariel to make Castro, in effect, the architect of American refugee policy. The answer is no. Another boatlift would not be pretty. And other nations are likely to be as reluctant to take in Cuban refugees now as they were in 1980. But Mariel was a problem, not a disaster. And many of the Mariel Cubans were legitimate refugees, as many in a second boatlift would be. The truth is America could handle a fresh surge of Cuban refugees, perhaps not painlessly, but without the turmoil and political fallout of 1980.

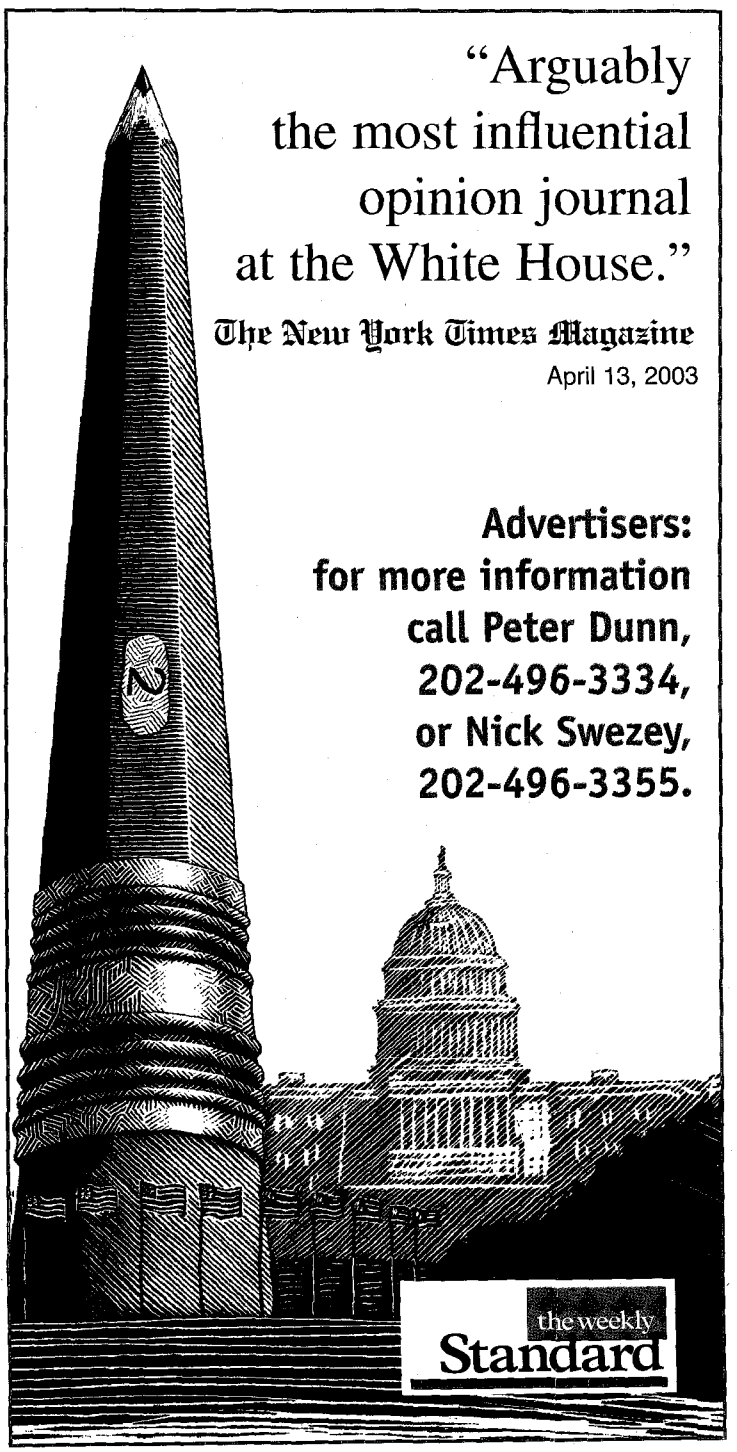
A simple fact should stand out in Bush's mind. The Cold War with the Soviet Union is over, but the Cold War with Cuba is not. Needless to say, Castro is not a leader with whom the United States should comfortably negotiate the terms of a refugee policy. The Bush administration has already set an unfortunate precedent by doing just that in the case of the 12 Cubans in July. So as a first step, Bush needs to repudiate this precedent explicitly and order the officials at the State and Justice departments who set it to reverse themselves.

A more important step is to revoke the "wet feet, dry feet" policy. Besides preventing legitimate refugees from reaching our shore, it is a cold and unfair way to treat people eager to reach America and freedom. What could be more at odds with America's tradition of accepting refugees—both political and economic refugees—than turning away those who fail by a few feet to reach dry land? Those who got over the Berlin Wall were warmly taken in. Those who escape Cuba's territorial waters should be, too.

There is a fair and compassionate policy that could be quickly put into practice. That is to bring all Cuban refugees ashore and create a process to judge whether they qualify to stay in America. The bias should be heavily in favor of letting them remain here as legal immigrants. After all, they are fleeing a Communist dictatorship. Even if they've left Cuba to improve their lives economically rather than to escape political persecution, what attracted them to the United States was freedom. And economic freedom is closely linked to political freedom. Sent back to Cuba, refugees who were merely seeking jobs will face retribution by Castro almost as harsh as if they were political dissidents.

A new policy on refugees, however, does not solve the bigger problem of Castro. It won't bring freedom to Cuba's 11 million people. What will is regime change. Bush has reversed the gradual normalization of relations with Castro that began under Clinton. Now he needs to go further. How? Treat Cuban dissidents the way we treated anti-Communist dissidents during the Cold War—that is, aid them in every conceivable way. That will require not only money, but also effective ideological warfare. Only that, along with the good Bush has already done, will shake the foundations of Castro's tyranny.

—Fred Barnes, for the Editors



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Help Not Wanted

European and U.N. political involvement will harm Iraqi democracy. BY REUEL MARC GERECHT

THE ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE behind the American occupation of Iraq, so advises a chorus of influential voices, ought to be the foreign policy equivalent of financially syndicating risk. America's budget deficit is too big, the costs of administering and reconstructing Iraq too high, and the killing of U.S. soldiers in the country too frequent for the United States to bear alone the burden of transforming Iraq into a stable, democratic country. A recent post-conflict reconstruction report issued under the auspices of the Center for Strategic and International Studies asserts that "the scope of the challenges, the financial requirements, and rising anti-Americanism in parts of Iraq argue for a new coalition that includes countries and organizations beyond the original war-fighting coalition."

Delaware's Senator Joseph Biden, the senior Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, wants to see "French, German, . . . Turkish patches on [soldiers'] arms sitting on the street corners, standing there in Iraq" doing common duty and giving the United States "legitimacy as well as some physical cover." "Our troops are stretched very thin," echoes Carl Levin of Michigan, the senior Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, adding, "We must end the feud with Germany and France and with the United Nations." Nebraska's Republican senator, Chuck Hagel, desperately wants to see "more United Nations involvement and more Arab involvement [in Iraq]. Time is not on our side. Every day we are losing ground." And Democratic presidential hopeful John Kerry, the junior senator from Massachusetts, is dismayed at the unilateralist "hubris" of the Bush administration. "We need to internationalize this. We need to do it now, and we need to do it openly, and we need to do it in order to defuse the [Iraqi] sense of occupation and protect the troops."

Irrespective of whether we should seek to have Europeans, Pakistanis, or Indians dying with or in lieu of Americans, irrespective of whether murderous hard-core Baathists and Sunni fundamentalists would feel less "occupied" and less murderous seeing Turks in their country, and irrespective of whether the economically stressed, antiwar countries of the European Union would actually give meaningful financial aid to Iraq, the idea of a "new coalition" to oversee the reconstruction of Iraq is entirely unwise. It would probably encourage the worst political and cultural tendencies among Iraqis, even among those who are profoundly pro-Western. It could easily send a signal throughout the Middle East and beyond that the Bush administration doesn't have the stomach to transform Iraq, let alone the region.

In the Muslim Middle East, in the age of bin Ladenism, where the rulers and the ruled are constantly assessing American strength and purpose, multilateralism, when it is so evidently cover for a lack of patience and fortitude, is never a virtue. However long the United States stays in Iraq, the cost in American lives and dollars will likely go up, not down, the more we "internationalize" the occupation. The men who are killing U.S. soldiers, and other foreigners, want to drive the United States and other Westerners out of the country. When Washington talks about the need to share the pain, what these men hear is that America wants to run. And however commendable may be the idea of a joint American-European project in the Middle East through which we can lessen the rancor between us, greater European participation in Iraq's reconstruction is much more likely to fray U.S.-European relations than enhance them. It will be hard to blame the Iraqis for the ensuing troubles. It's not their fault if Washington doesn't read Islamic history.

For the last 300 years in the Middle East, ever since the Ottomans discovered their severe and ever-increasing military inferiority vis-à-vis the West, Muslims have tried to play one Westerner off against another. Englishmen against Frenchmen, Frenchmen against Austrians, Englishmen against Russians, Germans against everybody, Soviets against Americans, and now, *inshallah*, the European Union against the United States. If the Bush administration cedes some political control in Iraq to the United Nations in an effort to win greater international assistance, it will likely open up a Pandora's box of competing Iraqi interests at a time when Washington wants, above all else, to ensure that Iraqis cooperate as cohesively and as expeditiously as possible, with each other and with us. Even though the United States will surely remain the predominant occupation force in Iraq—and will unquestionably bear the responsibility for failure regardless of any new "coalition"—the possibilities for serious Iraqi (or European) mischief could increase significantly if the United Nations, French, Germans, or Russians started more aggressively critiquing American actions.

Just consider the difficulties the Bush administration has had pre- and post-war because of the profound and petty differences between the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Pentagon. Though diminished, those differences persist. And they have had at times baleful repercussions for the

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post-Saddam administration of Iraq, confusing Iraqis about what American intentions really are. Now imagine layered on top of this U.S. debating society Europeans, Arabs, Pakistanis, and so on, all with their own national and cultural predilections.

It ought to be self-evident that Washington would not want any military or security assistance from any Muslim state that is not a functioning democracy, which essentially rules out everyone but Turkey. The Arab Sunni states, all ruled by dictators or princes, have to varying degrees an interest in *not* seeing a stable, democratic, Shiite-dominated Iraq born in their midst. America's toppling of Saddam Hussein may possibly provoke an intellectual and political earthquake in the Middle East, but we can be certain that the states of the Arab League, which refused to recognize the legitimacy of Iraq's new governing council, will try hard to preserve the status quo. And the Turks have an awful reputation in Iraq, both among the Kurds, who have long-standing ethnic troubles with their northern neighbors, and among the Arab Shia, especially their clergy, who see the Turks as propagators of a secularism hostile to Islam. The Bush administration went to great lengths to keep the Turks out of northern Iraq during the war. Having Turkish soldiers at Iraqi street corners would be one of the swiftest ways of torpedoing the country.

Intentionally or not, the Europeans could cause as much trouble as the Arabs or Turks. When I visited the French embassy in Baghdad in June, the French diplomats there were knowledgeable, friendly, intrepid, linguistically qualified, and better traveled within Iraq and considerably more plugged-into the local Baghdad scene than their overly protected American counterparts. But they were also French, which means many of their basic political-cultural assumptions about Iraq, the war, the Arab world, Iran, Islam, democracy, and the role of the United States in the region and beyond were different, often significantly different, from mainstream American assumptions. Now, in the fullness of time, the French way of looking at the world may prove more accurate than the American perspective. But post-Saddam Iraq is not the place to test the relevancy of the *pensée unique.*

Far too many of the assumptions about politics and culture regularly articulated by France's foreign minister, Dominique de Villepin, who is always ready to describe the *Götterdämmerung* that President Bush is on the verge of provoking, are simply antithetical to the views of the Bush administration and probably even to those of the Near East Bureau of the State Department. Inviting the French into Iraq—and the same could be said for the Germans and the Russians—would mean fundamental compromises over how we view the world and the Middle East. Post-Saddam Iraq is unquestionably a laboratory for new, potentially revolutionary ideas. But it ought not be a theme park where Eurocentric officials, diplomats, and think-tankers try out new strategies for bridging the America-Old Europe divide. Iraq and the Middle East are much too important to be held hostage to France and Germany.

Too much American-European "cooperation" would also needlessly damage our reputation with the Iraqis. Though the Western press corps prefers to dilate upon the foundering affection between Iraqis and Americans, Iraqi sentiment toward the Europeans, particularly among the Kurds and the Arab Shia, isn't fond. Wrongly or not, many Iraqis view the Europeans, especially the French and the Germans (and the United Nations), as sympathetic to Saddam Hussein's regime. It would be nonsensical for the Bush administration to want to have the French alongside them in Iraq. As the Iraqi oil industry slowly gains strength, the French will try to regain some footing inside the country, possibly even at the price of sending a token unit from the French Foreign Legion. Whether President Jacques Chirac and his foreign minister can swallow their pride and principles for profit is a more difficult question.

None of this means, however, that the Iraqis who detest the French or the Russians or the United Nations would fail to use any of these parties against the American administration in Iraq if by doing so they could advance their own interests. The process of drafting Iraq's new constitution over the next 12 months may turn out to be a bruising affair, as the various groups in the country try to advance their concerns. This battling will likely be healthy, revealing the seriousness of the Iraqis' constitutional intent. The Arab Sunnis, Arab Shia, and Kurds could naturally try to introduce outside parties into the internal Iraqi debate to gain advantage or protect their flanks. The United States is going to have a discreet (one hopes), front-row, judge-and-jury seat. The U.S. officials who oversee this affair may be tested severely, as the Iraqis wrangle among themselves about what belongs in a constitution.

This process can only be made messier if more Europeans and the United Nations play political roles. (There is, on the other hand, nothing wrong with the Europeans or the United Nations increasing their humanitarian assistance.) The Iraqis don't need any more temptations to faction and fractiousness. The Americans don't need non-Iraqi distractions. Only a successful conclusion to the constitutional process will bless American efforts in Iraq. In the eyes of the Iraqi people, legitimacy springs from there, not from the members of the United Nations or its Security Council. The French, Germans, Russians, Turks, and the Arab League cannot give what they do not possess. Nor can they save American soldiers' lives. But the gradual creation of a functioning Iraqi democracy can, and only the Americans and the Iraqis have the desire and the means to bring that about. ♦

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Laboring Democrats

The AFL-CIO holds an audition.

BY DAVID TELL

LAST TUESDAY IN CHICAGO, for only the second time, all nine candidates for next year's Democratic presidential nomination appeared together—at an event billed as a "working families forum" by its AFL-CIO sponsors. C-SPAN broadcast the session live. Most WEEKLY STANDARD readers no doubt watched all 90 minutes. And took notes. Those of you tending to a sick friend, however, were forced to rely on the following morning's newspaper coverage. Which was notable for (a) how little there was of it; and (b) how little resemblance it bore to what an ordinary viewer might have seen with his own eyeballs. I'll try to catch you up.

Consistent with the "Democratic fratricide" theme that dominates the news lately, post-debate coverage was sour—both about the candidates individually and about their party generally. The story the Knight Ridder chain sent around to its member papers suggested that, "though civil," the AFL-CIO forum ominously "revealed growing tensions" between the Democratic "liberal base" and the party's "centrist wing."

Nah—not really.

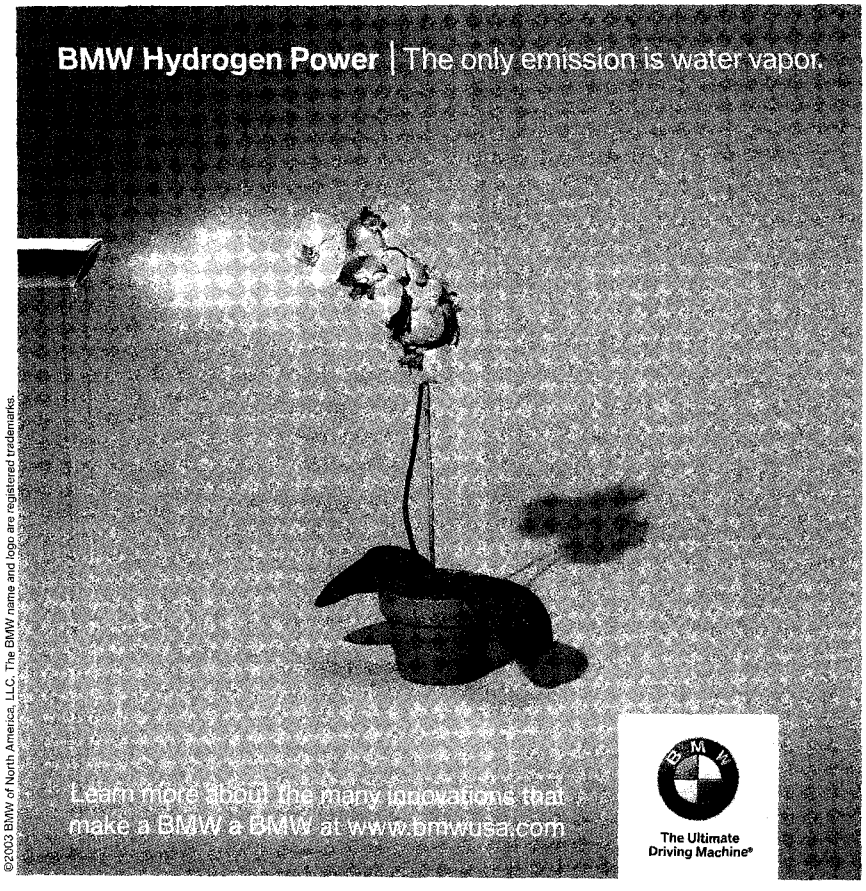
It's true there are disgruntled centrists at the Democratic Leadership Council, alarmed at the dudburger campaign being run by their favorite, Joe Lieberman. And it's true that on each of two important subjects, there's another first-tier candidate in the race who doesn't share Lieberman's instincts: Howard Dean on foreign policy and Dick Gephardt on trade. But in fact the party's emotional center of gravity is much closer to Dean and Gephardt than it is to Lieberman and the DLC (whose misfortune it is to agree with that bastard Bush from time to time). And judging from Tuesday's forum, Lieberman seems disinclined to make much stink about it at the moment—at least not when he's in mixed intra-party company. "We're not going to win by being opposed to all tax cuts," the senator offered in his affable, half-apologetic closing statement. "We're not going to earn the trust of the American people by being weak or ambivalent on defense. Let's pull together and fight for the heart and soul of the Democratic party and the future of America."

Unless they signal a serious fight over serious and specific policies—which simply didn't happen in Chicago—words like these aren't a sign of "tension." They're the political equivalent of a bedtime prayer.

Moving to the candidates themselves, in the order they first spoke. Not one of them got a positive media review that I've seen. But the first speaker's notices were decidedly negative.

(1) John Kerry had "a second difficult night at a televised Democratic forum," Adam Nagourney's *New York Times* dispatch concluded. Kerry's throat was hoarse, you see—"a distraction from what his aides had hoped would be a commanding performance." Such nitpicking! The greater "distraction" was the senator's wonkishness. He claimed that he'd vote against the "Free Trade Area of the Americas" pact "if it were before me

David Tell is opinion editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



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today" on grounds that "it doesn't have environmental or labor standards protections in it." (It doesn't have *anything* in it; ministerial negotiations over the plan's details aren't scheduled to conclude until the end of 2005.) And if we're going to find fault, how's this for nerdy, Dukakisoid self-promotion: "I have offered a [health care] plan that I am proud to say to you has been judged by *National Journal*'s independent group of experts . . . to be the most feasible and the best plan," and so forth.

The plan in question, however, is a perfectly respectable one, and Kerry discussed it comprehensibly—and audibly, despite his croak. He's run first or second in virtually every nationwide Democratic poll. Moreover, and more impressively, Kerry's managed to keep himself in a dead heat with Dean in New Hampshire despite Dean's phenomenal publicity momentum in recent weeks. Did the AFL-CIO event do anything to damage Kerry's standing? No. Bottom line: He's an experienced, well-known, mainstream, "electable" Democrat. No one should write him off.

(2) North Carolina's Sen. John Edwards you can write off, probably. The early book on him was "poised" and "personally magnetic" but "green" and "lightweight." Then he made a strenuous and largely successful effort to ballast himself with detailed policy proposals. None of which he brought with him to the big show in Chicago. Last week he regressed a fair bit, playing Opie on *Mayberry, R.F.D.*: "Well, first Bob, let me say I come from a family of textile workers." And, last Bob, let the senator point out that "my grandmother was a sharecropper." Edwards, despite his "rising star" aura, has yet to break out of the low single-digits in any significant poll—even in neighboring South Carolina. I note that Edwards, even while boasting that the labor movement is "personal for me," carefully neglected to provide a direct answer when questioned about his position on right-to-work laws like the one in North Carolina. His senatorship comes up for renewal next year. My hunch is that he privately expects to appear exclusively on his home state's ballot.

(3) Are we allowed to say that Carol Moseley Braun is a charming and well-spoken lady? She wasn't a very good senator, and she wouldn't be a very good president, and pretty much everybody knows that, and there's no point even pretending that her campaign will ever be more than tomorrow's trivia question. But it's not like she's the *worst* candidate in the race.

(4) Dick Gephardt's not the worst of them, either, though his campaign calls to mind that man in Norman Mailer's joke who complains to God about the many injuries and disappointments he's been made to suffer: "You're not treating me fairly, God. Why not?" To which God replies, after suitably dramatic thunder and lightning: "Because you bug me." Gephardt is smart, accomplished, knowledgeable, and responsible. He is a better representative of—and owed more by—his party's labor-movement backbone than any other politician. And yet his is a "languishing candidacy," as the *Los Angeles Times* brutally but not inaccurately puts it: slow to raise money; faltering in the polls (the *Des Moines Register* has Gephardt trailing Dean among *union* households); treated with a subtle but persistent and damaging drip-drip of condescension by the press.

Maybe it's Gephardt's slightly cloying, eager-beaver personality: The guy who always tries just a *little too hard*. "My dad was a Teamster and a milk truck driver," he reminded his union-label audience in Chicago. And "my mom was a secretary." And "neither of them got through high school." And—*enough* already—"my mom died about eight weeks ago."

Or maybe it's Gephardt's tendency to move his lips faster than his neurons are firing. The Gephardt campaign plainly wanted a single soundbite remembered from the event: "This administration has declared war on the middle class in this country." This soundbite had, by the end of the evening, been spoonerized by the candidate into a rather startling, fabulously over-the-top piece of news about President Bush: "He has declared war on the American people."

(5) As I say, though, Gephardt is not the worst of them. That would be Sen. Bob Graham of Florida, who runs behind Carol Moseley Braun in most of the polls, and for good reason. Graham provided the only real squirm-in-your-seat moment. And it came the very first time he was asked to open his mouth. "Sen. Graham, you have a solid globalization record," moderator Bob Edwards of National Public Radio noted. "How do you reconcile your recent promises on trade policy with your voting record on the issue?" Graham said . . . nothing, and stood blank-faced, for several agonizing seconds while nervous titters spread through the auditorium. Had it not occurred to him that maybe, just maybe, the AFL-CIO would want to hear a word or two about duties and tariffs and whatnot?

Graham's platform is tissue thin. He is inarticulate, and prone to winging it, and politically maladroit. Last week, when asked how he would help state governments dig themselves out of budgetary crisis, he told America's "working families" that local authorities should be allowed to impose sales taxes on their Internet purchases. I thought he was joking at first. But no, along with everything else, Graham is a singularly humorless man.

(6) Joe Lieberman is a famously nice guy, and a valuable public servant, and he comes to the race with a considerable name-recognition advantage over most of his competitors. But don't bet on him to last much past the beginning of next February—if that long. It may be that no avowedly "centrist" candidate could win the Democratic nomination in the present climate, so intensely polarized with hostility to the incumbent president are the party's grassroots voters. It may be, in fact, that mobilizing this anti-Bush sentiment is the only practical strategy by which the Democrats can hope to retake the White House.

But even if that's wrong—even if it's possible for a Democratic candidate to win his party's left-turn-only primary marathon while simultane-

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ously positioning himself for a run-to-the-middle general-election campaign in 2004—Lieberman shows no sign of having figured out the tricks involved. For whatever reason, he is a poor triangulator. Halfway through last week's debate he sheepishly reiterated his qualified support for purely experimental school-voucher projects. And got booed for it.

(7) Al Sharpton went over big in Chicago. He got off the best one-liner: He showed up 15 minutes late, explaining that he'd had a "non-union cab driver." Sharpton got the evening's only standing ovation, too—when he railed against the Bush Justice Department for unspecified investigations into union corruption. And so far as I can tell, Rev. Al's rousing reception in Chicago was par for the course. He has a genial, entirely un-politician-like stage presence, and Democratic audiences generally enjoy his company—in the moment, that is. When they answer pollsters' telephone calls, however, it's a different story. Sharpton barely rates a blip. My guess is that a lot of people vaguely sense they're supposed to disapprove of the man, but can't put their finger on why.

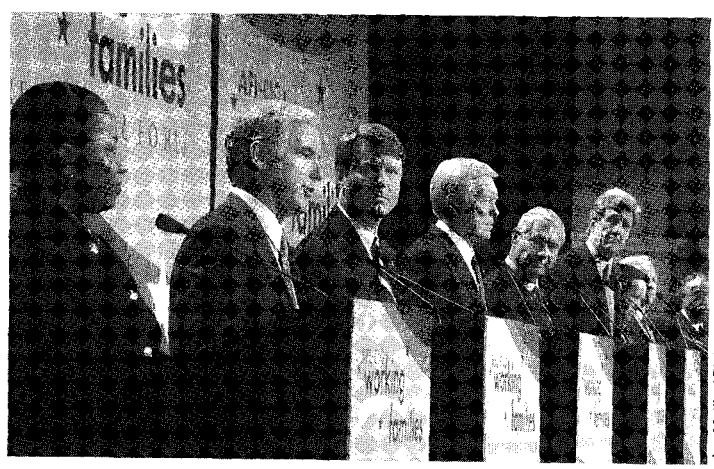
Here's why. Sharpton is a funny, genial, ingenuous man with a record of lurid demagoguery in the not-so-distant past. Also, he's an ignoramus—a totally unqualified candidate. What will President Sharpton do about rising health care costs, he is asked? "We need to have a constitutional amendment that is being proposed now under House Resolution 29 to make the quality health care of all citizens a constitutional right," he replies. This would be a stupid idea under any circumstances, but there's a more basic problem: House Resolution 29 is a bill to convert a temporary federal judgeship in Nebraska to permanent status. What will President Sharpton do to help workers who claim to have been harassed or fired for union-organizing activities, he is further asked? "If I were president, we'd have a federal law" banning such retribution, he promises, apparently unaware that just such a law has been on the books for decades.

(8) The last time I paid any extended attention to Dennis Kucinich—at a convention of New Hampshire public school teachers back in March—I remember feeling sorry for him. He was awful: His prepared speech was impenetrably allusive, he read the whole thing without hardly once looking up from the text, and he lost the room almost instantly.

Something's happened to him since then. He's become weirdly compelling. Kucinich spent most of his time doggedly attempting to goad his fellow panelists into a more-progressive-than-thou contest. Kucinich would "cancel" the NAFTA and WTO trade agreements on his first day in the Oval Office, he says. He would replace a "failed" private-sector health care system with a British-model, government-managed national scheme funded by a "7.7 percent tax paid by employers." And will "Dick" or "Howard" or any of the rest of them make such pledges, Kucinich wondered aloud—repeatedly and sarcastically? Well, will they, huh, huh? "Let's go home knowing that." This time, Kucinich did not lose the room. You got the sense, instead, that everyone was watching, intently, to see whether "Dick" or "Howard" would blow a gasket and strangle the man. Dennis Kucinich, it turns out, is going to be fun to watch.

He's still a kook, though, and his campaign is a self-indulgent fantasy, and he's not doing his party the slightest bit of good.

(9) Come to think of it, there was one other reason why I felt sorry for Kucinich at that March New Hampshire teachers' convention: He was made to take the podium minutes after Howard Dean had relinquished it. And Dean had been quite terrific, really: fluid, intelligent, engaging about otherwise boring policy questions, and magically able to convince a deeply partisan "special interest" audience that he was unalterably on their side—even while, in the same breath, he was explicitly refusing to promise them much of anything at all. That "crusading, antiwar liberal" business was largely atmospherics, I decided. Dean could win the nomination. Dean could also—DLC worrywarts and overconfident RNC apparatchiks to the contrary notwithstanding—win the White House.



Jay Mallin / Picture Desk

I haven't changed my mind, exactly. But I am struck, reading the recent transcripts and watching last week's debate, by the extent to which Howard Dean has changed his mien: He is running as if he's convinced the race is already his to lose—subdued and cautious on the issues, openly hard-eyed and practical about the political nuts and bolts. "The real question here tonight," he told the union folks in Chicago, "is which one of us can beat George Bush." *I can*, was his answer, which was hardly a surprise. *I've raised a ton of money*, was his basic explanation, and I wasn't surprised he found it a convincing one, either.

But I'm surprised he'd say so out loud. Keeping this calculating aspect of his talent and personality hidden was one of the biggest reasons he'd become a plausible front-runner in the first place. ♦

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Gore Goes Gaga

The paranoid style in Democratic politics.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

New York City

FOR AT LEAST a few minutes last Thursday, everything about Manhattan's Washington Square, home to New York University, was a political cliché. The socialists were protesting. "LaRouche in 2004" supporters, that distant look in their eyes, were shouting down their former allies. Activists were fighting with "fascist" police about where they could stand. Eager students were distributing flyers and holding up signs—"Draft Clark" and "Draft Gore" and "Bush planned 9/11 as a pretext for Afghan/Iraq invasion and war against the Bill of Rights."

Inside, the 500 spectators chatted in anticipation. The stage was empty but for a navy blue curtain and 12 American flags behind a handsome wooden lectern. Security officers scurried around looking for something to be nervous about. Folksy-jazz pre-concert music filled the room. And journalists complained about lighting, camera angles, and seating. (*USA Today* columnist Walter Shapiro, who walked into the packed house shortly after the event was scheduled to begin, threatened a powerless press officer: "I'm a columnist for America's most prominent newspaper, and I promise you if I don't get a chair, I will not mention NYU as the site of the speech.") Speakers saluted their host and one another. And the featured guest, a prominent politician dressed in a navy suit with a starched white shirt and a red tie, strode to the lectern to a loud ovation.

All of this is standard fare for a political event at a prestigious university, where radical activism is as much a part of the modern student experience as random hook-ups and booze. What made this event different was the speech that followed.

In a broad, rambling lecture that began with and returned many times to Iraq, former Vice President Al Gore toyed with some of the very same conspiracy theories peddled by the crazies outside. In 35 minutes, he managed to squeeze in several bizarre and acidic accusations directed at the Bush administration—recycling the blood-for-oil claim, suggesting the Iraq war was conceived and conducted to "benefit friends and supporters," labeling the administration "totalistic," and, in a reprise of an argument he made last fall, claiming that the Iraq debate had been cooked up to get Republicans elected.

At one point, Gore even seemed to suggest that the Bush administration itself might have been behind the forged Niger documents. "And on the nuclear issue of course, it turned out that those documents were actually *forged* by somebody—though we don't know who," he said, drawing out the last phrase for dramatic effect. The audience of activists from *MoveOn.org* laughed loudly and traded knowing looks.

Gore's speech came two weeks after former President Clinton, speaking to CNN's Larry King, suggested that mistakes in intelligence matters are understandable. Clinton also said, "The most important thing is, we should focus on what's the best way to build Iraq as a democracy? How is the president going to do that and deal with continuing problems in Afghanistan and North Korea? We should be pulling for America on this. We should be pulling for the people of Iraq. We can have honest disagreements about where we go from here, and we have space now to discuss that in what I hope will be a nonpartisan and open way."

In an interview before Gore spoke, one of his advisers said: "We heard President Clinton's take on this a couple weeks ago. Now we'll hear Gore's." And Gore's views couldn't be more different from Clinton's. The Bush administration, Gore said, is engaged in "a systematic effort to manipulate facts in service to a totalistic ideology that is felt to be more important than the mandates of basic honesty." Such deception, he says, is "dangerous" on domestic matters and potentially deadly in foreign affairs.

If the other Democratic presidential candidates have thus far avoided Gore's term-paper rhetoric, they clearly agree with his message. Howard Dean and Joe Lieberman were the first to issue statements praising Gore's speech. And so it seems we have the Democratic party's talking points for the 2004 election: President Bush and his advisers are not only wrong, they're dishonest. They're dangerous. They're virtually un-American.

It's one thing for Al Gore, who insists he's not running, to make such claims. But it's startling that all of the major Democrats agree with him.

John Kerry, in his only major foreign policy address to date, worried that "the Bush administration's blustering unilateralism is wrong, and even dangerous, for our country." Howard Dean says, "We may well be less secure today than we were two and a half years ago when this administration took office," and the Iraq war "has made us, on balance, not more secure, but less." Dick Gephardt said in late July, "I'm running for president because I believe George Bush has left us less safe and less secure than we were four years ago." Joe Lieberman: "George W. Bush's failed leadership has left our country dangerously unprepared to defend against and defeat the threat of terrorism." Bob Graham: "If you

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Mario Tama / Getty Images

Gore at NYU, August 7

were to ask me the question is America more or less secure today than it was on September 11, I would say if anything, we're less secure." Although John Edwards appears to have refrained from making that claim himself, his spokesman hasn't. "Given the situations President Bush has gotten us into in the world," she said, "the unstable situations his administration helped create, do Americans actually feel more secure with him as president? We don't know that they do. This isn't going to be a commander-in-chief election; it's going to be a security election."

It's a risky line, of course, because most Americans continue to support President Bush, the war in Iraq, and the broader war on terrorism. Convincing these Americans not only that the Iraq war was a bad idea, but that they are less secure in its aftermath will be difficult—at least in the absence of another terrorist attack, something that would transform the political landscape heading into the 2004 election.

Without another attack, as Democrats become more desperate to chip away at the president's popularity, Bush's political advisers expect a campaign of finger-pointing, insinuation, overstatement, and in some cases outright lies. A few examples from Gore's speech provide a useful preview.

* For months Democrats shelved suggestions—made by Dick Gephardt and Hillary Clinton, among others—that President Bush may have ignored warnings of the September 11 attacks. Those accusations are back. Gore urged President Bush to order his appointees to cooperate with the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, and insisted that Bush "let this National Commission know how he and his staff handled a highly specific warning of terrorism just 36 days before 9/11."

* Similarly, even as they have criticized many other aspects of the campaign in Iraq, Democrats have avoided repeating Tom Daschle's prewar claim that these mistakes would lead to the deaths of American soldiers. No longer. "Too many of our soldiers are paying the highest price for the strategic miscalculations, serious misjudgments, and historic mistakes that have put them and our nation in harm's way."

* Gore wasn't always so direct, sometimes preferring the passive voice to soften his harsh attacks. Before he accused the Bush administration of deception and dishonesty, he asked his audience to leave "aside for the moment the question of how these false impressions got into the public's mind." That is, who cares if no one from the Bush administration was actually deceitful, but blame them anyway.

* Moments after Gore waxed pedantic about the "mandates of basic honesty," he blamed the Bush administration for creating the "false impression" that "Saddam Hussein was partly responsible for the attack against us on September 11, 2001." But the Bush administration took pains not to make that claim. When Tim Russert asked Vice President Dick Cheney about Saddam and 9/11, Cheney said, "I want to be very careful about how I say this. I'm not here today to make a specific allegation that Iraq was somehow responsible for 9/11. I can't say that." Russert pressed the vice president, and Cheney reiterated his answer.

"There is—again, I want to separate out 9/11 from the other relationships between Iraq and the al Qaeda organization."

* Gore also claimed, "The evidence now shows clearly that Saddam did not want to work with Osama bin Laden at all, much less give him weapons of mass destruction." Leave aside for a moment that Gore's former boss warned about such collaboration. What's the evidence? Gore didn't say.

* Gore boldly demanded that the Pentagon "get rid" of the ill-conceived "Total Information Awareness" program. It was shut down months ago.

Gore concluded his remarks with praise for the Democrats who have announced their campaigns, but said he will not join them. Sure enough, he delivered his wild accusations with the sort of consequences-be-damned recklessness that would suggest he's not running. But he certainly looked like a candidate. And as the "*DraftGore.com*" flyer passed out at the exits reminded audience members, Gore said back in December that, while he won't be making a bid, he still has "the energy and drive and ambition" to do so. ◆

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How to Win Friends and Influence Arabs

Rethinking public diplomacy in the Middle East.

BY ROBERT SATLOFF

LIKE A SPORTS TEAM after a dismal season, the State Department is going through a "rebuilding process" to figure out how to win Arab and Muslim friends. As depressing statistics about anti-Americanism continue to mount, especially in the Middle East, Foggy Bottom recently announced the formation of a new committee, headed by former diplomat Edward P. Djerejian, to repair its woeful "public diplomacy" toward Arabs and Muslims.

Djerejian, head of State's Near East bureau under then-secretary James Baker, has served for the last decade as founding director of the James A. Baker III Institute of Public Policy at Rice University. In what could herald a revival of Baker's team at State, Djerejian is likely to pass his committee's findings to another Baker veteran—Margaret Tutwiler, former State spokesman and current ambassador to Morocco—who is expected to take over the department's top public diplomacy job in the autumn.

Creation of Djerejian's 14-member panel comes four months after the resignation of controversial public diplomacy chief Charlotte Beers, the onetime advertising executive. Under Beers, the buzzword was "branding," the idea that America could earn the loyal support of customers around the world through the sort of image-oriented campaign that wins repeat shoppers to Wal-Mart. Through a series of "I'm okay, you're okay" initiatives to Muslim audiences—television commercials, websites, and speakers programs—Beers tried to reconnect the world's billion Muslims with the United States the way McDonald's highlights its billion customers served.

The results were disastrous. Many Muslim countries refused to air the TV spots, while many who saw them damned the ads as puerile propaganda. At home, complaints about the Madison Avenue approach to diplomacy grew numerous. The most definitive sign that Beers had finally lost the confidence of the White House came this year as the administration proposed a net decrease in State Department spending on public diplomacy, despite the universally recognized need to improve America's message abroad. Beers resigned on March 3.

Not everyone agrees on the reasons for Beers's failure. The Djerejian committee will hear three different analyses. Each one portends a wholly different approach to public diplomacy.

One view holds that Beers was right to focus on common values (such as family, home, religion) and cultural interests (pop music, sports) that Americans share with foreign Muslims, but that she was too tentative and cautious in pressing the case. Advocates of this view—such as proponents of the new U.S. government-funded Arabic radio and satellite television networks—believe that blitzing Arab and Muslim countries with Britney Spears videos and Arabic-language sitcoms will earn Washington millions of new Muslim sympathizers.

A second view holds that many Muslims hate us for who we are, so unless we are going to change our spots, we should stop worrying about Muslim sensibilities altogether. Washington is the new Rome, these realpoliticians say, and an imperial power—even a benign one—should focus its energies on efficiency, not popularity. The only public diplomacy that matters, this argument goes, comes with victory (over al Qaeda, the Taliban, Saddam, etc.).

A third view holds that Muslims hate us for what we do, not who we are, and counsels that we must change our policies if we hope to restore some luster to America's standing. Adherents—mostly critics of current U.S. Middle East policy—urge Washington to distance itself from Israel, get out of Iraq, and abandon President Bush's revolutionary talk about promoting freedom in Iran.

If Djerejian's panel is smart, it will reject all three approaches.

Yes, many Muslims do disagree with aspects of our Middle East policy, but selling out our friends, like Israel, to suit our critics is just an invitation to blackmail.

Yes, winning the war on terror is vital for U.S. security, but our anti-terror campaign will require local partners to ensure that the terrorists are on the run, not just underground.

And yes, values matter, but most Muslims aren't teeny-boppers who can be swayed by a rap artist from the 'hood who extols the virtues of Islam. Incidentally, the State Department really does spend tax money on promoting a Muslim rap group, Native Deen, whose lead singer, Joshua Salaam, is civil rights director for the Hamas-friendly Council for American-Islamic Relations. Salaam once praised the terrorists who blew up the USS *Cole* for having "a lot of guts to attack the United States military." Very ironic, of course, as is the fact that Salaam himself served four years in the U.S. Air Force.

How, then, should the job of promoting American interests be approached? The first step is to rec-

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ognize that a successful public diplomacy relies on three ingredients: a short-term focus on image, a long-term investment in future allies, and, most of all, a consistent emphasis on promoting U.S. interests.

Advancing U.S. policies must be the touchstone of all public diplomacy. Sounds obvious, but it is actually a radical statement, completely out of touch with the State Department's feel-good outreach to Arabs and Muslims over the past two years. In the post-9/11 world, we help neither ourselves nor the millions of moderate Muslims around the world by substituting serious talk about the dangers of militant Islam with dumbed-down, Rodney King-style patter about everyone "getting along."

It is true that many Muslims disagree with U.S. policies, but what they know often comes from the distorted, caricatured view of reality propagated by irresponsible local media prevalent in most Muslim countries. Those media have a field day with U.S. policy because most U.S. officials rarely talk to them—adult to adult—about what our views really are and why we hold them. For example: Despite the fact that the FBI's most wanted terrorist list includes three Hezbollah operatives responsible for the 1983 bombings of the U.S. embassy in Beirut, the current U.S. ambassador in Lebanon closed his remarks at the solemn ceremony marking the twentieth anniversary of that heinous act of terrorism by extolling the power of "forgiveness." One hardly wants to know who he thinks is supposed to forgive whom?

With rare exceptions, such as David Welch in Egypt and Ronald Neumann in Bahrain, U.S. officials in the Arab world hardly ever take the trouble to explain to local audiences, plainly and dispassionately, why Americans support Israel, oppose militant Islam, and feared Saddam Hussein. But the U.S. government, in an odd effort to promote Arab contributions toward Middle East peace, did spend thousands of dollars last month broadcasting and distributing a program on its international television network that suggested the way to achieve progress was to "pressure Israel." This is cockeyed.

Polishing America's image is a key element of public diplomacy too, but only if it is imbued with purpose. One example of a failure waiting to happen is the U.S. government's new Arabic language radio station, Sawa.

In 2002, Sawa became the darling of Capitol Hill based on a listener poll showing that it had won a large audience in several Arab countries through an innovative mix of pop and Arabic music, interspersed with brief, informative, U.S.-style news reports. But Sawa's braintrust rested on these flimsy laurels, opting not to beef up its content with significantly more news, analysis, and talk. (Instead, it heralded further listener poll numbers that its news content was "just right.") The result is that Sawa is on the verge of becoming just another radio station, easily replicable, instead of something uniquely American.

Arab and Muslim leaders aren't stupid. They may not have devised Sawa's music mix, but they know how to copy it.

Arab and Muslim leaders aren't stupid. They may not have devised Sawa's music mix, but they know how to copy it. Last month, Jordanian army radio launched its own new station based on the pop-Arabic music format; Morocco already has a station with this cross-cultural mix; others are sure to follow. So unless Sawa begins to provide its listeners with a message they will never get from local radio stations, it is doomed.

Getting the questions of interests and image right is not enough. Unless our public diplomacy is reoriented to support our friends, isolate our critics, and punish our adversaries it will remain part of America's problem abroad, not part of the solution. Sadly, much of what we do today is just the opposite.

Instead of investing money and effort to help millions of secular, liberal Muslims who fear the spread of Wahhabi radicalism, we spend our time searching under every rock for elusive "moderate Islamists." Incredible as it sounds, the U.S. government also spends tax dollars to subsidize study visits to the United States by radical Islamist journalists, to send outspoken critics of U.S. policy on speaking tours abroad, and to teach anti-American Islamist parliamentarians how to criticize pro-Western governments more effectively.

Every dime spent on such masochistic folly should instead go to investing in our local allies, the brave men and women who fight the daily battle to educate their kids and raise wholesome families in the face of rising religious totalitarianism. This means encouraging American businesses abroad to adopt local schools and support technical training, pumping up the pittance we spend on English-language education, and targeting our exchange programs to reward our current friends and identify future ones. Washington has begun to get some things right, such as restarting Arabic-language publishing after a decade in which all print ventures were scrapped in favor of Internet-based outreach—a silly idea given that the Middle East is the world's least-linked region of the world. But it is far too little and much too late.

Three principles—promoting our interests, investing in allies, and advancing a principled image of ourselves—should form the core of America's redesigned public diplomacy. Of course, even if we do all this, we may never win popularity contests in Cairo or Casablanca. But if Djerejian and company get it right, then at least our soldiers and our public diplomacy specialists will be fighting on the same side. ♦

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A Foreign Policy Worth Paying For

But the Bush administration doesn't have a plan for doing so. BY IRWIN M. STELZER

WHEN GEORGE BUSH unfurled his banner of "compassionate conservatism," most critics predicted it would not be long before the conservatism overwhelmed the compassion. They were wrong. Instead, the compassion has overwhelmed the conservatism.

President Bush's compassion now impels him to give tax refunds to people who pay no taxes; free prescription drugs to Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, whose children will no longer be burdened with inheritance taxes; subsidies to already-rich farmers to produce outrageously expensive ethanol to add to gasoline; free insurance protection to utilities that own nuclear plants; tariff protection to inefficient steel companies; and subsidies to auto and coal companies to do research they would otherwise have to pay for out of their sales receipts. It almost—but not quite—makes one pine for the days of that cheapskate, Bill Clinton.

But fear not. In the Micawberesque world of Bushonomics, these are all free lunches: Taxpayers will simultaneously get these and other benefits, and tax refunds, and tax reductions to boot. Never mind that the due date on untold billions in unfunded liabilities lurks just around the corner.

Better still, we are on the verge of getting a restructured Middle East consisting of vibrant, prosperous democracies, and on the cheap. How is this latest feat of economic legerdemain to be financed? Why, with Iraqi oil, of course.

Both Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and Office of Management and Budget director Josh Bolten managed straight faces when they told a congressional committee that it is impossible to estimate the cost of our nation-building adventure in Iraq.

Of course, if one believes that there is no price too high to pay for a peaceful Middle East—a perfectly credible position—then one need not bother with anything so trivial as estimating the cost of attaining that objective. But, at least so far, the administration has declined to take such a position. Indeed, when former White House economist Larry Lindsey suggested that achieving an enduring peace in the Middle East might be worth the expenditure of 1 percent of our GDP, or about $100 billion, he ran into a firestorm of criticism from White House pols who believe the American people will back any war so long as it is costless.

It turns out that Lindsey may have been a wild-eyed optimist. The administration reckons that the postwar effort to restore security (read: pay our troops) and provide some semblance of public services to Iraq is costing nearly $5 billion every month —and due to rise. And that includes virtually nothing for major rebuilding of the Saddam-shattered infrastructure. When civil administrator Paul Bremer came to Washington to explain to the White House and Congress that a muscular foreign policy isn't to be had on the cheap, and that merely repairing the infrastructure would cost "maybe $100 billion; it's a lot of money," he was sent back to Baghdad with his begging bowl empty. Just get all that Iraqi oil onto the market, he was told, and our foreign policy would be self-financing.

Enter Philip Carroll, our man assigned to Iraq's oil ministry (rumored to have resigned last week). He is guessing that by investing about $2 billion, Iraq can get its exports up to 2.5 million barrels of oil a day by the end of 2004, after satisfying domestic demand, which is estimated to be about 500,000 barrels daily. (All of these figures are estimates: Some say domestic consumption is only 350,000 barrels a day.) That target is about in line with what Iraq claims its prewar output was, but many experts consider it optimistic, given the inability of coalition forces to prevent the looting of computers, the hijacking of the cars and buses that oil field workers need to get to work, and the sabotaging of electric power supplies.

But let's be wildly optimistic and assume that Carroll hits his target, and that profits from Iraqi oil sales come to $20 a barrel. A bit of arithmetic shows that those sales would yield well under $20 billion a year, about enough to cover current outlays on our troops for four months, or to provide funds needed for only one of the many reconstruction tasks, the construction of adequate water-treatment facilities. But certainly not enough to cover reconstruction needs and the $30-$40 billion Iraq needs "to rehabilitate active wells and develop new fields," according to a study prepared for the Council on Foreign Relations and the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University.

In short: Revenue from the sale of Iraq's oil cannot begin to finance the reconstruction of the country. Bremer, in what may be his ticket out of Baghdad and into the private sector with Lindsey, knows this: "We are going to have to spend a lot more money than we are going to get revenue, even once we get oil production back to prewar levels." Which means that Wolfowitz is either innumerate (unlikely), or is being economical with the truth

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when he says, "We're dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction, and relatively soon."

And don't look to private foreign investors for money. The major oil companies have announced that they will not venture into the country until security is assured, which suits the state-owned monopoly oil company just fine. Iraq's State Oil Marketing Organization has announced that it has no interest in foreign investment at this time, and will not be interested until entirely new fields are opened for exploration. No surprise: State-run monopolies are notorious for freezing out private-sector players.

Faced with this grim arithmetic, Bremer floated the idea of securitizing future oil revenues by selling bonds with the future revenues to go to the lenders. This appealed mightily to the investment bankers eager for the fees that would result from the sale of these IOUs, and to hawks such as Caspar Weinberger, who announced in *Forbes* that we need not worry about whether we have the right to assume debts on behalf of the Iraqi people because "defeated countries that have had their regimes changed have no sovereignty."

Analysts at the Pentagon disagreed, pointing out that the securitization plan smacked of "stealing Iraqi oil." So it was shelved, leaving Bremer to rely on a "donors' conference," scheduled to be held in New York in October, and to include many of the countries that have reneged on their pledges to make funds available to Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, any plans to reorganize the Iraqi oil industry to end the state monopoly are on hold. One Pentagon source says the problem of security is absorbing all the energy the administration can muster. So we are likely to be left with the situation that has stunted the economic and political development of other oil-producing nations: Revenues will flow to the state, for use by its bureaucracy, rather than to the Iraqi people. If you want to know how well that works, you need only look to Saudi Arabia and Iran.

So there you have it: a foreign policy that promises enormous long-run benefits, but requires enormous short-term outlays, for most of which the administration has refused to budget.

Those conservatives who are willing to face this problem fall into two classes. Some opt for a U.N. resolution legitimizing the occupation of Iraq, in the hope that France, India, and other countries would then supply troops and funds in support of the nation-building effort. Indeed, the *Financial Times* reports that our increasingly war-weary and financially stretched British allies are "for the first time talking openly about backing a new United Nations Security Council resolution."

Others view such an appeal to the Security Council as an ignominious surrender to France and the egregious Kofi Annan. The result, they plausibly fear, would be a victory for Annan's massive bureaucracy, and the death of any dreams of a market-oriented, prosperous, democratic Iraq. To this crowd, go it alone is the route to success.

But if we are to call the tune, we have to pay the piper. The buck that stops in Baghdad will have to come from Washington. That's where the administration's foreign policy collides with its domestic policy. To retain control over the course of events in Iraq without sharing authority, the administration must trust that the American people can be persuaded that the costs of our foreign policy are worth bearing, given the likely benefits. It must then proceed to adopt a short-term program to pay for that policy, and a longer-term plan to finance that policy and its domestic initiatives.

Suppose, for example, that the president were to propose a $5 per barrel tax on imported oil, which might raise gasoline prices by about a dime per gallon. Along with a tax that captured the revenue from the inevitable increase in the price of domestically produced oil, such a tax would yield almost $40 billion a year. Not enough to rebuild Iraq, but a good start. Then, sell bonds with the revenues from this tax as backing, and we might just be able to support the rhetoric of the new nation-building policy with some real resources.

Would such a tax hurt the economy? Perhaps, but not certainly. For one thing, if we really believe that a pacific Middle East is in our interest—among other things we would no longer have to police the Gulf and be prepared to defend oil-rich monarchies from takeover by anti-American Islamic fanatics—the long-run benefits should vastly exceed the short-run costs.

For another, if the OPEC cartel believes that the current price of $30 per barrel maximizes its profits, and that a higher price will curtail demand for its oil, a $5 tax might force it to lower its target price by an equivalent amount. After all, OPEC routinely complains that the high gasoline taxes levied in Europe reduce the demand for its oil—which is another way of saying that the consumer nations' taxes reduce the producer nations' ability to raise prices.

That done, the administration can address the financial problems created by the triumph of compassion over conservatism. For starters, whatever happened to tax reform? A truly innovative tax program—one that taxes consumption rather than work, pollution rather than output, windfalls rather than rewards for risk-taking—might indeed yield more tax revenues to finance foreign and domestic programs without adversely affecting the economy's growth rate. But if even a fundamental change cannot pay for all that the administration would like to do, it would then have to face the hard job of confronting the American people with the necessity of making choices, allowing us to decide whether we love our new entitlements enough to pay for them.

Removing one's head from the sand can initially be blindingly painful, but a few blinks in the new sunlight, and one's vision clears. I'm told it works for ostriches; surely it would work for the Bush team. ♦

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Saudi Arabia's Overrated Oil Weapon

There's no need for Washington to be deferential to Riyadh

By Max Singer

Overestimates of Arab oil power are an important and harmful influence on policy toward the Middle East. The following myths, or outdated facts, support the world's misjudgment of the power of the Persian Gulf oil producers—especially Saudi Arabia, but also Iran, Iraq, and the Gulf states.

(1) Most of the world's oil reserves are in the Middle East. Wrong. That is only true for "conventional" oil, the stuff that flows easily. When you count "unconventional" oil, Canada has larger reserves than Saudi Arabia. There is more unconventional oil than conventional oil, and most of it is in the western hemisphere—principally Canadian oil sands and Venezuelan heavy oil.

Technological developments over the last 10 years have reduced the cost of producing unconventional oil to below $15 a barrel, so that it is being produced profitably at the price at which oil has sold for almost all of the last 30 years. We'll see later why the much lower production cost of Gulf oil gives the Gulf countries less power than people think. Already a million barrels a day of unconventional oil is being produced, and it is just as good as the black goo pumped in the old-fashioned way.

All kinds of objections are made to the recognition of unconventional oil, partly because of the long history of disappointments with it. Some of the oil sands are much harder to exploit than others. Production requires a lot of energy. Greens will prevent some of this oil from being recovered. Even so, 30 million barrels a day of new production can be added by 2020 with costs below $15 a barrel. There is plenty of time to bring production cost down on the more difficult half or three-quarters of the total resource.

Max Singer is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and the author (with Aaron Wildavsky) of The REAL World Order: Zones of Peace/Zones of Turmoil. *Paul Michael Wihbey, president of GWEST Inc., made a major contribution to this article.*

(2) The world can't get the increased oil supply it will need in coming years without buying a larger share from the Persian Gulf. Wrong. There are many potential sources of increased oil supply—in addition to unconventional oil. In 2020 the Gulf may supply even less than the 23 percent of the world total it provided last year.

New oil-production technology—such as the use of computers to reduce finding costs and directional drilling to reduce production costs—has greatly expanded the amount of oil available outside the Gulf region. And the end of the Soviet Union started a process of opening large deposits in Russia and the Caspian Basin. As a result, much more oil will flow from West Africa, the former Soviet Union, off-shore South America, the Gulf of Mexico, and other regions than people expected a few years ago. And the reduced cost of liquefying and shipping natural gas may reduce the demand for oil.

If there is to be enough oil in 2020 without an increase in the share coming from the Gulf, the rest of the world will have to add roughly 100-120 million barrels a day of gross new production by then (including both replacements for existing and new wells as their production falls and programs to get more oil from old fields). But there is probably almost 200 million barrels a day potentially available by 2020 outside the Gulf. This includes up to 40 million barrels a day in the former Soviet Union (more than half in Russia and the rest in the countries of the Caspian Basin), 40 million barrels a day of unconventional oil from Canada and Venezuela, another 45 million barrels a day from the western hemisphere, mostly offshore, 25 million barrels a day from West Africa, and 40 million barrels a day from the rest of the world. Of course none of these totals will be reached; the world doesn't need that much oil, and investors won't drill for more oil than is needed.

Most people have never seen such high numbers for any of these regions because ordinary projections try to match world demand to world supply and therefore limit each regional estimate to fit within the estimated world-

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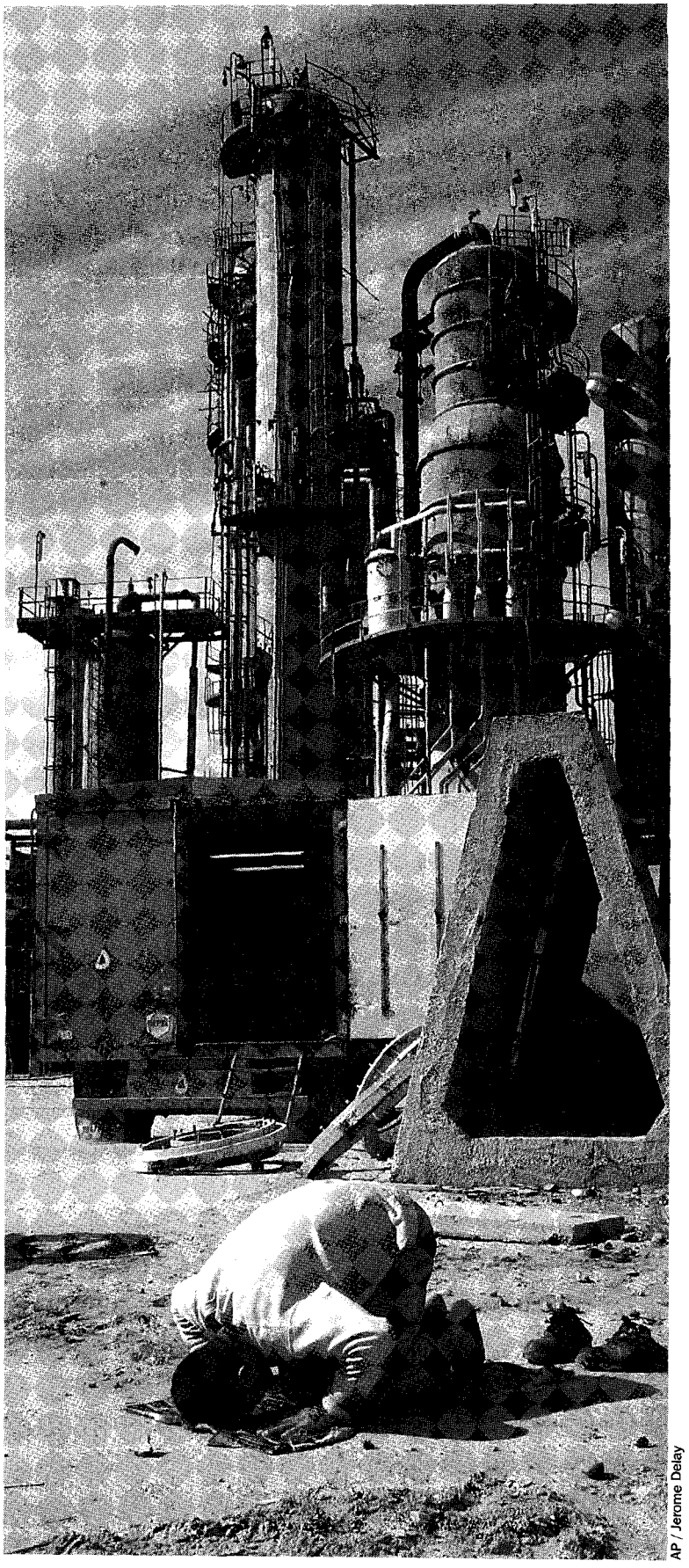
wide demand. None of the standard estimates of future oil supply from each region is an estimate of how much oil is available and could be produced in that region; each is an estimate of *what will be produced.* The different question asked here—What is the maximum each region could produce by 2020?—gives a sense of the menu of options available to oil companies that are deciding where to drill wells and build pipelines. Political or other problems could prevent most of these regions from reaching their maximum potential, even if enough investment were available.

Another reason these estimates may strike people as excessively high is that they do not refer to either of the familiar categories, "proven reserves" and "total resources." "Proven reserves" is not relevant to projections as far ahead as 17 years because no one spends the money to prove reserves that far in the future. "Total resources" includes oil that will be exploited far in the future, if at all. The numbers here are based on what experienced oil people, familiar with the geological work that has been done, would estimate could be found and brought on line in the next 17 years. Such estimates obviously could prove much too high or much too low. But since there seems to be nearly twice as much oil potentially available as will be needed, it is entirely plausible that oil companies will be able to produce what is needed. And it would take only a little more production from outside the Gulf to reduce the Gulf's share of total supply to below the 23 percent level of 2002 if the Gulf countries do not provide for investment to expand their capacity.

(3) The low production cost of Gulf oil lets the Gulf countries determine how much of world demand they will supply. Wrong. Where the world's future oil supply comes from depends on where oil companies decide to drill wells and make other investments. Since there is much more oil available in the ground than will be needed in the next few decades, oil investors have much choice about where to get oil. Right now there is practically no investment being made in increasing—or even maintaining—oil production capacity in the Gulf region; instead, almost all drilling is being done in other parts of the world.

There are two reasons the oil industry is not investing in the Gulf. Owners, not producers,



AP / Jerome Delay

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control the benefit of low production costs, so low costs in the Gulf don't necessarily give companies an incentive to invest in producing Gulf oil. And oil producers have strong incentives to avoid sources that are as politically vulnerable as the Gulf seems to be.

The Gulf countries could theoretically produce their oil themselves—or give the companies strong incentives. But this requires capital and/or effective decision-making, and so far only some of the smaller Gulf states are expanding their capacity. We have reason to hope that there will be improved regimes in Iraq and eventually Iran, which could very well lead to major production increases—but if Iraq and Iran are both removed from the "axis of evil," we will have even less reason to be concerned about how much of world oil supply comes from the Persian Gulf.

(4) The United States and other consumers need Gulf oil much more than the Gulf countries need the money paid for the oil. Wrong. Most of the Gulf countries have become very dependent on their oil income, which provides almost all their foreign currency. The oil-consuming countries get less than a quarter of their oil from the Gulf and have stockpiles of oil that could replace Gulf supply for six months or more.

Twenty years ago, oil gave Saudi Arabia a per capita income of $20,000 and huge financial reserves, while the rapid growth of income made it easy for the government to afford a boycott or other temporary reduction in oil sales. Today Saudi per capita income is down to $6,000, the huge financial reserves have been replaced by a large national debt, and much of the country is dependent on government agencies' having a regular flow of cash.

It used to be thought that if oil from other regions, or unconventional oil, threatened the dominance of the Gulf producers, then the Saudis and other Gulf countries would blow away the competition by taking advantage of their low production cost to force the price down below the competitors' production cost. Even if that were true in the past, it is not true today. No Arab regime has the stomach—or the funds—to endure very low prices for an extended time, if at all. And almost all of the non-Gulf producers make a profit even if the price is as low as $15 a barrel, and many are profitable at even lower prices.

(5) Saudi Arabia has the power to determine how much the world has to pay for oil and therefore the power to help or hurt Western economies. Mostly wrong. So long as Saudi Arabia has the ability quickly to produce more oil than it is selling, it can bring down prices in periods of tight supply. But the Saudis understand that keeping prices from going too high is in their national interest as well as ours, because they would lose more than most producers if high prices chased consumers to other energy sources.

But the Saudis and other Gulf suppliers don't determine whether there is plenty of oil available for sale or whether supply is tight. On any day, the world's ability to produce oil is the result of the decisions that oil-producing companies took 2 to 10 years earlier about how much to invest in new wells and other facilities. If companies invested enough in the past, there is plenty of capacity. If investors were too cautious in the past, or if demand grew faster than expected, then there is a shortage of capacity and prices are liable to rise—especially if producers can cooperate in holding back supply.

If, because investment was sufficient, worldwide production capacity is comfortably above demand (as it was a few years ago, but is not today), then producers rarely have the ability to restrict production enough to raise prices. It is too hard to prevent "cheating" on OPEC quotas. They are lucky if they can restrict supply enough to keep prices from falling to low levels.

Since there is more than enough oil in the ground (at least for the next 20 years), the amount of oil supply from 2006 to 2020 doesn't depend on what nature has created; it depends on how much money oil producers decide to invest. If Western oil companies invest enough, there is nothing the Gulf countries can do to make supply tight enough to sustain high prices. The Gulf countries have the opportunity to create shortages and high prices by restricting their own sales only when there has been a prior failure by companies from the consuming countries to make the necessary investments.

The main conclusion that American policymakers have been drawing from these myths—or outdated ideas—about oil is that the United States had better be deferential to Saudi Arabia because it has the power to ruin our economy. The United States pays more deference to the Saudis than to any other government in the world. If any other government imposes restrictions on American diplomats in their country, the United States applies the same restrictions to that country's diplomats in the United States. The only exception is Saudi Arabia—which, for example, pays no price for denying American women with diplomatic passports the right to drive in the kingdom. Recently there have been a number of stories about how American mothers have suffered as a result of U.S. deference to Saudi Arabia when their children were kidnapped by their fathers and taken to Saudi Arabia.

Saudi policy toward the United States is based on their perception of our fear of their oil power. That is why Crown Prince Abdullah felt free to patronize President Bush in Crawford, Texas, less than a year after 15 Saudi citizens attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. That is why they have felt safe enough to allow more

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than $50 billion of Saudi oil money to be exported to stir up hatred of the United States in the last 20 years.

When the American political community realizes that the world economy is not in Saudi hands as much as the Saudi economy is in the hands of Western oil buyers, Washington can stop being afraid of the Saudis. Then the Saudi government will understand that it must respond to the United States very differently than it has in the past.

The Saudis' belief in their oil power doesn't come from their economic analysis of the oil market, it comes from their recognition of our fear of them, our belief that we are vulnerable to what they can do to us. If we understand that the facts have changed, and we do not have to accept aggressive use of an "oil weapon" against us, then they will not risk their fate on the basis of any calculation of the balance of oil power. In practice they may test us, and we have the capacity to pass their test.

The rise of terrorism by militant Islam against the United States and the West coincided with the rise in oil prices of 1979-80 and the subsequent transfer of hundreds of billions of dollars from the West to Muslim countries. The perception of Muslim oil power may well be one reason why Muslims like Osama bin Laden feel that America is weak enough to be attacked and destroyed. Ending the palpable—and now unfounded—Western fear of Muslim oil power is likely to play an important role in reducing Muslim support for militant Islamists who want to attack the United States.

The Saudis' belief in their oil power doesn't come from an economic analysis, it comes from their recognition of our fear of them.

When American politicians realize that the new facts of the oil industry destroy the basis for the traditional American awe of Saudi oil power, they will begin to use more normal standards in thinking about Saudi-American relations. To be sure, the Saudis, with or without the other Gulf or OPEC oil countries, can create short-term difficulties for the United States and other oil importers; but such difficulties, springing from normal business bargaining, present a limited danger, comparable to that resulting from labor strikes. There is no reason to be afraid of this.

The old fear was that the Saudis could do worse than that. They could decide to withhold their oil, on which we had become dependent, to punish us for our foreign policy. But if the Saudis are removed from their pedestal and treated like a normal country, American leaders will ask whether a small, defenseless government, with little support from its own people and great unpopularity in the Muslim world, could really think of deliberately harming the wealthiest, most powerful country in the world. The Saudi royal family must realize that if it deliberately attacks the American economy, not just to get more money for itself but to punish the United States for its foreign policy choices, the United States has many economic and political ways to make the Saudis regret such an attack, without any need to use or threaten to use America's military power.

In other words, the Saudis' power over the United States is a house of cards that can be blown away by fresh thinking based on a realistic understanding of the current oil business.

The second conclusion is that there is no strategic imperative for the United States to reduce its "dependency" on imported oil by reducing oil consumption. We should make sure that world oil-production capacity stays comfortably ahead of world demand for oil. We should also ensure that there are large stockpiles of oil to improve the short-term balance of supply and demand. And we need to stop feeling dependent when we are not. These measures are all feasible and have moderate costs. They do not require changing our way of life or our economy.

When we move to a more realistic understanding of oil markets, we can also move away from the current approach to oil stockpiles, which insists that they have nothing to do with influencing oil prices and exist only to meet physical shortages of oil. The only meaningful measure of shortage is price. The point of oil storage, and storage capacity, should be to reduce potential fluctuation in prices. Oil prices have historically moved up and down so dramatically because in the short term buyers have no alternative to paying whatever they have to pay to get oil, and when prices are low, sellers have to sell their oil for whatever they can get for it. But when there is a lot of stored oil, it can be used to meet short-term demand and prevent the price from rising very far. And when there is a lot of empty storage capacity, it allows short-term demand to prevent prices from falling far enough to jeopardize investment in future supply. Stored oil also reduces producers' ability to blackmail consumers.

Militant Islam's attacks, culminating in 9/11, have led to a new fluidity in the politics of the Middle East. These days are the crucible in which the future Middle East is being shaped. It has become apparent that Saudi oil money has been one of the decisive reasons for the rise of militant Islam throughout the world. To examine our own policy freshly we need to shake off myths about Saudi oil power. ♦

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The Dysfunctional House of Saud

Compromised by terror, the Saudi regime will have to change or die.

By Stephen Schwartz

There comes a time in the history of every oppressive state when the need for change is suddenly and widely understood to be imperative. Inevitably, an incident occurs that illuminates the government's misrule and undermines the legitimacy of the regime. For the government of Saudi Arabia, such an incident occurred on September 11, 2001. Indeed, the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon by 19 terrorists, 15 of them Saudi subjects, did as much to subvert the authority of the Saudi monarchy at home as it did to warn the world of the menace of Wahhabism, the totalitarian form of Islam that inspires al Qaeda and is the Saudi kingdom's state religion.

The same event, of course, also made obvious the need for the United States to alter its cozy relationship with the Saudi monarchy. In that sense, the withholding of 28 pages (among other redacted material) from the 800-plus-page report on 9/11 released last month by the congressional intelligence committees is a throwback to the days when protecting Saudi sensitivities at all costs was standard in Washington. Exactly how the U.S.-Saudi relationship is to be disentangled and straightened out is not yet clear. That this must be done—for the security of Americans, as well as for the liberation of the 23 million people in Saudi Arabia from the dark night of Wahhabism—is no longer in doubt.

Seen in the context of this impending transformation, the suppression of the 28 pages—which apparently trace Saudi funding and other support for the terror network—is a minor episode. Events that are already in the public record tell an indelible story.

Stephen Schwartz is the author of The Two Faces of Islam *and director of the Islam and Democracy Program at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies in Washington.*

These start with September 11 itself. Again: The hijackers were not Palestinians or Chechens or any other aggrieved Muslim minority. Most of them—like their chief, Osama bin Laden—were Saudis. Rudely awakened by this blow, Americans who cared to follow news from the kingdom have been able to learn a great deal.

In early 2002, there was the revelation that the Saudi government openly funds "martyrdom"—including suicide bombings—in the Palestinian confrontation with Israel; it did so to the tune of $400 million in 2001 alone, according to the official Saudi embassy website.

Six months after 9/11 came an incident revealing of the purely domestic effects of Saudi tyranny: A fire in a girls' school in Mecca left 14 dead, when members of the Wahhabi religious militia, the *mutawwiyya*, forced the victims back into the burning building because they were insufficiently covered. The school was located in an apartment building that should not have been used for educational purposes. Anger swept the kingdom, and Crown Prince Abdullah, widely considered the "good" member of the royal elite, who listens to the people, ordered girls' education removed from the jurisdiction of the clerics and handed over to direct state supervision. He was opposed in this by Prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz, the powerful minister of the interior, who has blamed 9/11 on Jewish agents. Soon Wahhabi imams were declaring from the pulpit that the dead girls were noble martyrs who had died to protect their virtue.

Scandal struck again in November 2002 and touched Princess Haifa al-Faisal, wife of Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the longtime Saudi ambassador to Washington (and nephew of Prince Nayef). It was learned that money had gone from her purse to the pockets of two 9/11 hijackers, Khalid al-Midhar and Nawaf Alhazmi, by way of two Saudi intermediaries, Omar al-Bayoumi and Osama Bassnan.

The Riyadh bombings of May 12, 2003, which killed almost two dozen innocent people, nine of them Americans, seemed to provide the ultimate warning to the Saudi

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rulers. Yet inside Saudi Arabia, it is widely believed that the bombing was directed from within the ruling circles, to let the United States as well as locals know that demands for substantial change would not be tolerated. In the Riyadh bombings, as in 9/11, the crises of Saudi foreign relations and of Saudi domestic rule merged.

Meanwhile, international investigation of terrorist financing was confirming the role of Saudi-backed Islamic charities in such activities, including in the United States. Saudi authorities repeatedly affirmed their commitment to the war on terror, but failed to deliver on promises to shut down terror-funding charities and apprehend rich supporters of al Qaeda. They claimed to have dismissed 1,000 extremist clerics from their state positions, but sources within the kingdom point out that tens of thousands more remain in the mosques, and those who were fired were old men ready to retire. To be sure, Saudi dissenters also say that virtually all of the terrorist suspects killed in recent actions by the regime were imams. Confirmation of this is hard to come by as the regime seldom releases these people's identities.

Corbis / Jacques Langevin

A public sculpture in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Then in April came the U.S. liberation of Iraq and the specter, terrifying for the House of Saud, of a Western-oriented, protodemocratic regime on Saudi Arabia's long northern border. Such an Iraq would almost surely be led by Shia Muslims—whom the Wahhabis view much as the Nazis viewed the Jews. Even now, Wahhabi preaching incites Saudi subjects to head north to die in jihad against America, and at least 1,000 of them, according to Saudi informants, have answered the call. It is thus that the ranks of Baathists attacking coalition troops in Iraq were suddenly fortified by adherents of al Qaeda. Lately, however, Saudis have told of Wahhabi volunteers returning disappointed, rejected by the Iraqis they had claimed they would save.

With all this and more already public information, one might wonder what is left to protect of the Saudis' reputation. Take the terrorist involvement of Saudi charities. The 28-page redacted section of the 9/11 report is said to detail the financing, recruitment, and direct organization of terrorists by the main Saudi charities, including the International Islamic Relief Organization and the Al-Haramain Charitable Foundation, and official bodies charged with Wahhabi religious outreach, such as the Muslim World League and its branch office, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY).

Senator Susan Collins, a Republican from Maine, describes as "strong and compelling" the evidence that such groups have been used as conduits for the funding of terrorists. Yet much of the evidence has long been available. These groups, which operated freely in the United States for years, have been under federal investigation only since 9/11. WAMY, for example, whose former U.S. head was Abdula bin Laden, brother of Osama, openly disseminates hate literature on U.S. soil and across the globe. Its publications target Shia Muslims as well as Jews and Christians.

An instance of U.S. government protection of such groups—precisely the kind of accommodation that must cease—is State Department spokesman Richard Boucher's apparent defense of the collaboration between WAMY and the Arab American Institute, the most respectable Arab advocacy group in the United States. At a June meeting in Riyadh, WAMY boss Saleh al-Wohaiby stood up

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beside James Zogby of the Arab American Institute to announce that the two organizations would "take up the cases of some 13,000 Arabs and Muslims, some of whom have been targeted by the U.S. government for possible deportation."

With the relationship exposed, Zogby claimed that the meeting with WAMY had been arranged by the U.S. embassy. Boucher backed him up: Without mentioning WAMY by name, he explained on July 15 that one of the administration's goals in the Middle East is to engage "people and groups that do not share our views," and that Zogby's participation in such efforts had taken place "at the request of the U.S. government." Thus has an official agency of the Saudi regime, known for its hateful propaganda, seized an opportunity to interfere in internal U.S. legal affairs—and done so with Washington's aid and approval.

The disparity between the attitude of Sen. Collins and that of Richard Boucher is detectable throughout the debate over 9/11, the Saudis, and the 28 pages. While some on Capitol Hill press for disclosure, others maintain a posture of dissimulation. While the Treasury Department struggles to enforce sanctions on Saudi financing of terrorism, the State Department often blocks its way. At every turn, Saudi wiliness and effrontery are assisted by short American attention spans and a failure to connect the dots.

In this context, the 9/11 report has usefully drawn attention once again to the strange case of Omar al-Bayoumi and Osama Bassnan, the beneficiaries of largesse from Ambassador Bandar's wife. In January 2000, al-Bayoumi, a footloose Saudi "student" with a lot of cash, befriended hijackers al-Midhar and Alhazmi, who turn out to have been more than obscure members of the conspiracy: The 9/11 report calls them "principal hijackers," responsible for coordinating the movements of the others, and the first to land on U.S. soil. Al-Bayoumi—whose income suddenly rose after he met the two—assisted them in setting up house in San Diego. In the wake of September 11, al-Bayoumi and Bassnan, a known extremist, returned to Saudi Arabia. But only after the recent release of the 9/11 report did FBI officials go from Washington to Jeddah to supplement interviews conducted with al-Bayoumi by locally based FBI agents. The attempt at an upgraded inquiry was unsuccessful. One wonders why.

Documents examined by the *Wall Street Journal* show that al-Bayoumi was a contract employee of the Saudi Civil Aviation Agency for seven years. This suggests a whole new avenue for investigation. Even in the era of the Internet, it is unlikely that a sophisticated enterprise like the 9/11 attacks could be coordinated from backward Afghanistan. Picking the flight schools where the suicide pilots were trained, researching the rules for carrying sharp instruments aboard jetliners, ascertaining planes' fuel capacities and long-haul routes and similar desiderata of the conspiracy required some time and skill. Yet the deed was planned and carried out in less than two years, with its participants, and large sums of cash, moving speedily around the United States and the world. The Saudi Civil Aviation Agency could be expected to possess a considerable amount of the information necessary for so efficient an operation.

In addition, according to the 9/11 report, the Saudi to whom al-Bayoumi reported at the agency was the father of a man whose photo was found in an al Qaeda safe house in Pakistan and who spent a year in Afghanistan ending in May 2001. Saudi authorities have denied that al-Bayoumi and Bassnan were agents of their government. But they admit that Dallah Avco Aviation, a branch of the Dallah al-Baraka Group, a gigantic banking and business conglomerate, manages the Air Navigation Systems Support project on which al-Bayoumi worked. The head of the Dallah al-Baraka Group is Saleh Abdullah Kamel, whose name appears in the "Golden Chain," a roster seized by Bosnian authorities in Sarajevo in March 2002 listing Saudi donors to bin Laden and his associates. Kamel is named as a supplier of funds to Adil Abdeljalil Batterjee, founder of the Benevolence International Foundation, designated a terror-financing entity by the Treasury Department. Plainly, the delegation of U.S. counterterrorism officials currently on the ground in Saudi Arabia lobbying for more serious action against the charities has its work cut out for it.

Soon after the 9/11 report was published, Saudi foreign minister Prince Saud al-Faisal flew to Washington and challenged President Bush to release the redacted portion. This dramatic gesture notwithstanding, the Saudis will maintain their posture of denial in the near term, regardless of what happens in Washington. If the 28 pages are withheld, the Saudis will claim unfair intrigues based on concealment; if the pages are released, they will complain of false accusations emanating from the Jews. Already in late July, the pro-government Saudi newspaper *Al Nadwa* was blustering, "There is no doubt that the fingers of the Jews and Israel in particular are behind these campaigns, as much in their planning as in their implementation." So what then will finally force change?

The U.S.-Saudi relationship is unique in our history, and redefining it in the light of what Americans now know about terrorism, Wahhabism, and Saudi governance will not be simple. There was no manual for the Western response to the fall of Soviet totalitarianism, and neither is there any blueprint for disengagement from Saudi totali-

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tarianism. President Bush cannot be faulted for missteps as the administration feels its way; the blacking-out of the 28 pages was an error, not a coverup. But the administration must resist the bland assurances of Secretary of State Colin Powell and others, who happily echo Saudi assurances that somehow, someday the relationship will be restored to its earlier, more pleasant status. Indeed, full disclosure can no longer be put off. Almost two years have gone by since September 11, and Saudi promises of help in the war against terror have grown stale.

The first task before the administration remains what it was on September 12: to obtain a full and transparent accounting of Saudi involvement in 9/11, no matter how high it reaches into ruling circles. Inevitably, this means focusing on Prince Nayef—the leading figure most infected with Wahhabi hatred of the West, according to Saudi dissidents, and the minister responsible for the terror-funding charities, to which he has contributed generously. Following full disclosure, we must insist that the Saudi regime turn off the tap on money flowing to the Wahhabi religious bureaucracy and maze of state-affiliated organizations—especially their international operations—and thus separate the government of Saudi Arabia from its extremist ideological legacy. We'll know we're on the right track if Saudi Arabia's withdrawal from global trouble-making leads to an opening up of Saudi society, not to a final hunkering down behind closed doors.

Reuters New Media / Corbis

Crown Prince Abdullah with Prince Nayef (left)

The longer action is delayed, the worse for us, as well as for the millions obliged to live under Wahhabi-Saudi rule. Sources inside Saudi Arabia say that while terrorist preaching continues unabated in state-controlled mosques, a new and ominous idiom has emerged: Wahhabism is no longer described as "pure Islam," but as "our tradition"—that is, an expression of national distinctiveness rather than of expansionist, reactionary utopianism. As Saudi Arabia comes under global scrutiny, and the majority of the world's Muslims continue to reject the Wahhabis' presumption to guide them, the regime is turning further inward. Its subjects now lead an atomized existence; people no longer socialize, but remain locked up in their compounds, speaking only to their families. The Soviet dictatorship followed this path to disaster. Saudi subjects are searching for a way out.

On a recent visit to Washington, a Saudi dissident emphasized the present opportunity: "If it were not for September 11, the world would still know nothing of the oppression we face inside Saudi Arabia," she said, "and the rulers would still be confident of their power. We owe it to the victims to press for an open inquiry and for changes that will make our country a normal one, respected in the world as an embodiment of a peaceful and forward-looking Islam."

In that spirit, it is still possible to believe that the U.S.-Saudi relationship may again be made beneficial for both parties. While change in the character of the regime in Riyadh cannot be avoided, it need not entail civil war if Saudi leaders have the statesmanship to bow before reality. Americans can help by keeping the pressure on; certainly the U.S. government, the media, and academe should do more to spotlight human rights violations inside the kingdom. Already the effect of the 9/11 investigation on both countries cannot be overstated. Daylight on Capitol Hill—with or without those 28 pages—may eventually bring daylight in Mecca and Riyadh. ♦

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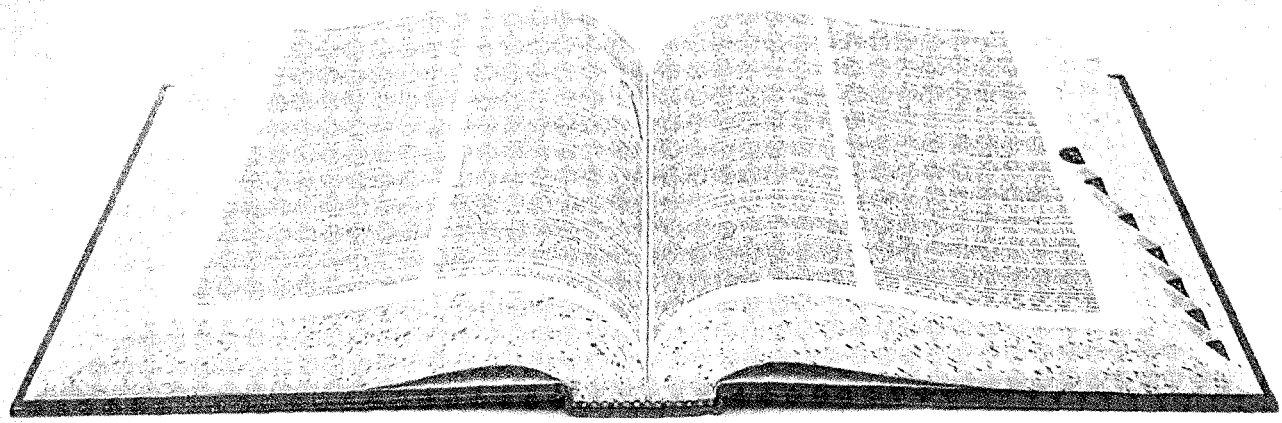
Don't Look It Up!

The Decline of the Dictionary

By Robert Hartwell Fiske



All photos: Lev Nisnevitch / The Weekly Standard.

This new slang-filled edition of the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* does as much as, if not more than, the famously derided *Webster's Third International Dictionary* to discourage people from taking lexicographers seriously. "Laxicographers" all, the Merriam-Webster staff remind us that dictionaries merely record how people use the language, not necessarily how it ought to be used. Some dictionaries, and certainly this new Merriam-Webster, actually promote illiteracy.

Several years ago, the editors of *The American Heritage Dictionary* caused a stir by deciding to include four-letter words in their product. Since the marketing strategy of including swear words has now been adopted by all dictionary makers, Merriam-Webster, apparently not knowing how else to distinguish its dictionary from competing ones, has decided to include slang words in its eleventh edition. There's nothing wrong with trying to distinguish their product, of course, but when it means tampering with the English language—by including idiotic slang and omitting infinitely more useful words—it's reprehensible.

Robert Hartwell Fiske is editor and publisher of The Vocabula Review, *a monthly online publication (*www.vocabula.com*). He is also the author of* The Dictionary of Concise Writing *and* The Dimwit's Dictionary.

Merriam-Webster proclaims it has added some ten thousand words to its *Collegiate Dictionary*. To do so, as a company spokesman admitted, "some words had to be kicked out" of the earlier edition. More interesting than this new edition would be a book of the words abandoned. Were they sesquipedalian words that few people use or know the meaning of, or even disyllabic words that few people use or know the meaning of? For it's quite true that Americans are increasingly monosyllabic; many people cannot even manage to say "disparage" or "disrespect" or "insult," so enamored are they of the repugnant "dis" (included in the *Collegiate* tenth and eleventh).

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary
Eleventh Edition
edited by Frederick C. Mish, et al.
Merriam-Webster, 1,600 pp., $24.95

What word did Merriam-Webster decide to omit to make room for "funplex" (an entertainment complex that includes facilities for various sports and games and often restaurants)? What word did they omit in order to add "McJob" (a low-paying job that requires little skill and provides little opportunity for advancement)? What words did they omit in order to add "headbanger" (a musician who performs hard rock), "dead presidents" (United States currency in the form of paper bills), and "Frankenfood" (genetically engineered food)? Frankly, I rather like the coinage "Frankenfood." But if people do not enjoy or feel comfortable eating genetically altered foods, which I suspect is likely, the word will be fleeting.

Almost all slang, the people at Merriam-Webster should know, is ephemeral. Most of the slang added to the eleventh edition will never see the twelfth—or at least ought not to. The editors at Merriam-Webster, though, seem altogether perverse in their insistence on welcoming and then holding on to silly slang. Several editions ago, they added the term "far-out," and they have yet to remove it—even though almost no one (certainly no one I know) uses the word today.

As most people know by now, dictionary makers today merely record how the language is used, not how the language ought to be used. That is, lexicographers are descriptivists, language liberals. People using "disinterested" when they mean "uninterested" do not displease a descriptivist.

A prescriptivist, by contrast, is a language conservative, a person interested in maintaining standards and correctness in language use. To prescriptivists, "disinterested" in the sense of "uninterested" is the result of uneducated people not knowing the

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distinction between the two words. And if there are enough uneducated people saying "disinterested" (and I'm afraid there are) when they mean "uninterested" or "indifferent," lexicographers enter the definition into their dictionaries. Indeed, the distinction between these words has all but vanished owing largely to irresponsible writers and boneless lexicographers.

Words, we are told, with the most citations are included in the Merriam-Webster dictionaries. Are then words with the fewest omitted, or in danger of being omitted? The *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* includes "alright," but what word was "kicked out" so that an inanity, an illiteracy like "alright" could be kept in? All it seems to take for a solecism to become standard English is people misusing or misspelling the word. And if enough people do so, lexicographers will enter the originally misused or misspelled word into their dictionaries, and descriptive linguists will embrace it as a further example of the evolution of English.

Merriam-Webster's laxicographers, further disaffecting careful writers and speakers, assign the meaning "reluctant" to the definition of "reticent." "Reticent" means disinclined to speak; taciturn; quiet. "Reluctant" means disinclined to do something; unwilling; loath. Because some people mistakenly use "reticent" to mean "reluctant," dictionaries now maintain "reticent" does mean "reluctant." There are other examples of Merriam-Webster's inexcusably shoddy dictionary-making. According to the dictionary's editors, the spelling "accidently" is as valid as "accidentally"; the verb "predominate" is also an adjective meaning "predominant"; "enormity" means the same as "enormousness"; "infer" means the same as "imply"; and "peruse" means not only to examine carefully but to read over in a casual manner. *The Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* actually promotes the misuse of the English language.

Of course, it's in the financial interest of dictionary makers to record the least defensible of usages in the English language, for without ever-changing definitions—or as they would say, an evolving language—there would be less need for people to buy later editions of their product.

A few months ago (before the new edition of the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate* was published), I took a poll of *Vocabula Review* readers and discovered that 68 percent of the respondents rejected the strong descriptivist idea of dictionary-making, and only 4 percent would necessarily bow to the definitions and spellings found in the dictionary. More than that, though, the new Merriam-Webster is a sign that dictionaries, at least as they are now being compiled, have outlived their usefulness. Dictionaries are no longer sacrosanct, no longer sources of unimpeachable information. Dictionaries are, indeed, no longer to be trusted.

That a president can ask "Is our children learning?," a basketball star can use the word "conversate," a well-known college professor can say "vociferous" when he means "voracious," and another can scold a student for using the word "juggernaut" because she believes it means "jigaboo" is disturbing. But these are precisely the sorts of errors, if enough people make them, that the staff at Merriam-Webster will one day include in their dictionaries:

child: n, pl or sing **children**.

conversate: to exchange thoughts or opinions in speech; to converse.

vociferous: **1** marked by or given to vehement insistent outcry, **2** voracious.

juggernaut: **1** a massive inexorable force, campaign, movement, or object that crushes whatever is in its path, **2** usu offensive jigaboo; black person.

Over the last forty and more years, linguists and lexicographers have conspired to transform an indispensable reference work into an increasingly useless, increasingly needless one. ◆

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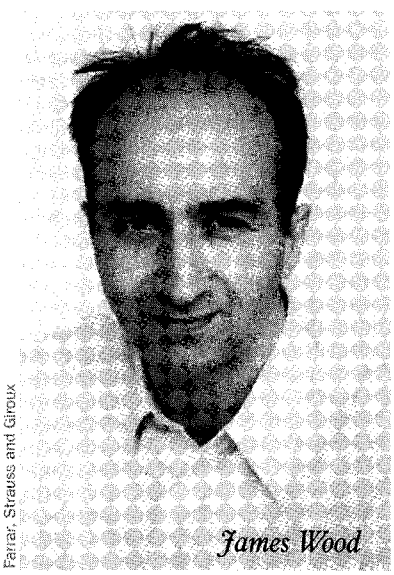
God and Mr. Wood

James Wood's religion-haunted novel.

BY ALAN JACOBS

Thomas Bunting—the protagonist of *The Book Against God*—makes a practice of setting his face.

> It was during the first or second year of our marriage, when I was working hardest on the Ph.D., that I contracted my habit of "setting" my face to resemble an appropriate emotional state—humble in post offices (because the staff are always so sullen), generous in shops, distracted at the university (to impress the students), arrogant in buses, confident with my parents, genial with Jane, sober with Max's parents, and so on.



Farrar, Strauss and Giroux

James Wood

The Book Against God
by James Wood
Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 272 pp., $24

Anyone who has read much of the last half-century of British fiction will perceive an echo of Kingsley Amis's Jim Dixon—the hero of *Lucky Jim*—with his extensive repertoire of faces: his "Martian invader face," his "shot-in-the-back face," and so on. Thomas Bunting resembles Jim Dixon in other ways as well: He drifts along the margins of an English university, possesses a remarkable collection of tics and peculiarities (in Bunting's case a mania for lying and a terror of insects), makes a mess of his relationships with women, and demonstrates a striking inability to get proper work done. In short, he's immediately recognizable as a comic type, familiar not only from *Lucky Jim* but also from more recent books—Nelson Humboldt in James Hynes's *The Lecturer's Tale*, for instance.

Yet in the course of this novel, Thomas Bunting proves to be a richer character than most of these, and one of the achievements of *The Book Against God*, the literary critic James Wood's first novel, is the gradual deepening of Thomas. Early in the novel it becomes clear that we will see few of the familiar landscapes of academic comedy: Thomas tells us that he teaches a few classes at University College, London, and that his students probably don't respect him—and then he moves on, because that aspect of his life holds little interest for him. Looking back over the recent years of his life, Thomas says that he "moped and bunted"—his coinage—around his house in a dirty old paisley dressing gown, smoking, drinking, getting next to nothing done on his doctoral thesis; and yet all that scarcely matters, because he has bigger fish to fry. Thomas tells us these things, because unlike Amis and Hynes, James Wood allows his protagonist to use first-person narration—and allows him also much of Wood's own extraordinary power of language.

James Wood is one of the finest essayists writing in English today, though his skill has been expressed almost always in book reviews. I groaned when I learned that he would be publishing a novel: Why is it, I thought, that the most masterful writers of nonfiction prose—Annie Dillard is a prime example—feel that they have at some point to turn to fiction? It is as though they do not think themselves serious writers until they can drop a novel on our laps. But if Wood's reviews are about as "serious" as writing gets, he reveals to us in *The Book Against God* a real gift for fictional narration as well.

In his essays, Wood's intelligence is manifested most purely in his metaphors—look, for instance, at how sharply he concludes a summary of Coleridge's distinctive power: "The great pathos, tension, and comedy of Coleridge's work is that he commits the sins against which he warns—and commits them while in the act of warning against them. It is why he is so likeable a Christian, despite his orthodoxy. His piety shares its borders with a rogue state." In *The Book Against God* Wood yields this metaphorical gift to his protagonist. Thomas notes that in summer, the trees in a London park "exuberate into green, each leaf a delegate sent out by life." When his wife Jane, in great anger, leaves him in his parents' house in a northern village, he describes her departure thus: "The car bristled away over the gravel—that luxurious substance that bears no impress, retains no memory of wear." And in one of the novel's loveliest moments, Thomas hears on a recording of a piano sonata the faint noise of the pianist breathing: "it was the sound of hard work, but it was also the sound of existence itself—a man's ordinary breath, the give and take of the organism, our colourless wind of survival, the zephyr of it all."

Wood also seems to give Thomas some of his own history—growing up in a Christian family near Durham, an association with the great cathedral

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there (Thomas writes of listening to the choirboys sing; Wood was such a choirboy), a quite thorough loss of faith in adolescence—and this has led some of the novel's reviewers to assume that the book is rather straightforwardly autobiographical. But one should be careful, for the deviations from Wood's life are noteworthy. Wood has written movingly about the mark his upbringing has left upon him, despite, or because of, his rejection of his childhood faith: "The child of evangelicalism, if he does not believe, inherits nevertheless a suspicion of indifference. He is always evangelical." But Thomas's father Peter, a professor of theology turned Anglican priest, dismisses what he calls the "intellectually vacant, crudely evangelical approach," and Thomas is not even sure whether Peter believes, in a recognizably substantive way, the creed that he affirms. It falls to a former colleague of Peter's to assure Thomas, "I think he's a pretty solid believer. I'm sure Peter would say, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'"

This point bears emphasis because otherwise it might be too easy to assume that this novel is itself a "book against God." It is not, at least not simply; it strikes me as virtually impossible that anyone should be moved to atheism by Thomas's story, and certainly Wood makes no efforts to convince his readers—if anything, he stretches in the opposite direction. Often, when Thomas is supposed to be working on his dissertation, he turns his attention instead to a lengthy brief for atheism that gives this novel its title: his "Book Against God," or "BAG" for short. We see a few excerpts from Thomas's BAG, and if they are not especially persuasive, there are some good novelistic reasons for that. Some years ago, in an essay on Albert Camus, Wood noted that "the fiercest objectors to Christianity are often themselves believers; their belief is doubt-intoxicated, while by contrast the atheists are merely drunk on certainty." Thomas may well be such an atheist: Timothy, the same man who testifies to Peter's status as a "pretty solid believer," responds to one of Thomas's condemnations of religious belief by saying, "What interests me is your certainty."

And yet Thomas's certainty, as one might guess, has its hidden fragilities. Timothy tells Thomas that God "palpably does exist for you . . . because you can't stop talking about 'God.'" Thomas's ongoing BAG is evidence of unfinished business; indeed, this novel itself constantly explores all the unfinished crucial business in Thomas's life: his ongoing quarrel with Christianity, yes, but also his broken marriage and his complex but essentially loving relationship with his father. Wood captures the nuances of Thomas's ongoing negotiations with his life; and we leave the book with a sense that those negotiations will indeed be ongoing.

Likewise, these negotiations are subject to a frightening range of contingencies. Wood's novel seeks to capture the thread of the contingent in the weave of experience. Writing about Ian McEwan, Wood once expressed some reservations about the masterful control McEwan exercises over his characters' lives: "More often than not, one emerges from his stories as from a vault, happy to breathe a more accidental air." One of the finest things about James Wood's *The Book Against God* is its careful presentation of the "accidental air" that we all breathe every day.

At the end of the book, we leave Thomas *in medias res*, wondering whether the accidents that await him will bring him the reconciliations that, with most of his heart, he wants—even bring him, perhaps, back to the God whom he refuses to worship and with whom he hopes, someday, to be finally and irrevocably done. ♦

Knowing Despite Ourselves

J. Budziszewski explains morality.

BY J. DARYL CHARLES

"Once upon a time," J. Budziszewski begins *What We Can't Not Know: A Guide*, "it was possible for a philosopher to write that the foundational moral principles are 'the same for all, both as to rectitude and as to knowledge'—and expect everyone to agree." What the Chinese call the Tao, what has been described in Plato and Jesus as the Golden Rule, what moral and political philosophers call natural law, what is embodied in the Ten Commandments, and what the Apostle Paul referred to as the "law written on the heart"—one could look to a *consensus* in the human race (our evasions, excuses, and subterfuges notwithstanding) as to fundamentals of right and wrong.

What We Can't Not Know
A Guide
by J. Budziszewski
Spence, 288 pp., $27.95

Today all that has changed, laments Budziszewski. Rather, we must be prepared to hear that foundational moral principles are *not* the same for all people. Indeed, professional philosophers are resolutely *leading* the charge rather than sounding the alarm. Personhood is a matter of utility, function, and degree, we are assured, while human beings may *not* after all possess an inherent dignity, sanctity, and worth. Neither abortion nor infanticide, nor suicide, for that matter, is intrinsically wrong.

J. Daryl Charles is a visiting fellow at the Baylor University Institute for Faith and Learning and author of Virtue Amidst Vice *and* The Unformed Conscience of Evangelicalism.

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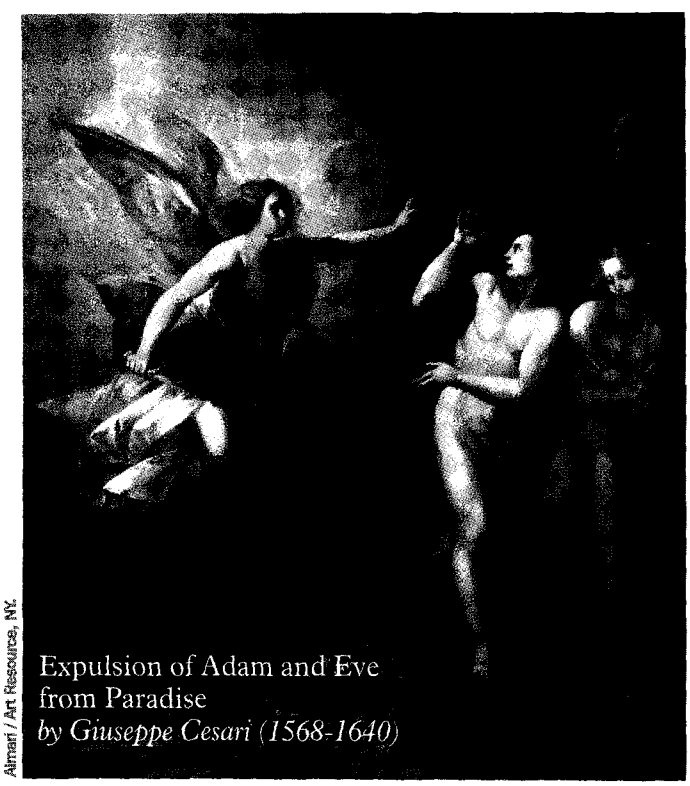
What We Can't Not Know follows on the heels of Budziszewski's *The Revenge of Conscience*, a thoughtfully written semi-autobiography of Budziszewski's journey to and away from nihilism, and *Written on the Heart*, in which Budziszewski considers the history of natural law. Perhaps the author realized that natural-law thinking can no longer be presumed in Western culture. In any event, *What We Can't Not Know* is written in a tone suggesting that moral skepticism is more deeply ingrained in American culture than Budziszewski seemed once to acknowledge.

His argument is this: However off-putting, rude, or inconvenient it may be to our enlightened sensibilities, there are moral realities that we all intuit—realities that are impossible *not* to know. This is not to say that we know them with unfailing clarity or that we fully realize their implications or that we never pretend we don't know them. Nevertheless, our awareness of a basic right and wrong, that two plus two equals four, is as real as arithmetic and not lacking rather substantial evidence. Budziszewski describes with refreshing honesty our evasive tendency as we attempt to "connect the dots" of moral evidence in the cosmos. The more sophisticated among us prefer to "cook the moral data" as it were, so that, for example, "we don't want dinner but the pleasure of feeling full; nor knowledge, but the pleasure of feeling knowledgeable, nor love, but the pleasure of feeling loved." And so on.



Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise
by Giuseppe Cesari (1568-1640)

Almari / Art Resource, NY.

Aside from the sheer force of Budziszewski's argument, there are two features that make *What We Can't Not Know* engaging. One is the considerable portion of the book that is devoted to treating objections. A related feature is his description, in language that is nonreligious and avoids condescension, of humanity's brilliant attempts at rationalizing moral dullness, our unwillingness to name evil, and our repeated attempts to suppress the natural moral law.

Reading *What We Can't Not Know*, one is immediately reminded of C.S. Lewis's *The Abolition of Man*, a short but extremely dense treatise on natural law written half a century ago. Lewis's argument was basically that in neglecting the law of nature, the "law of oughtness" (the moral impulse that holds sway over all societies irrespective of time and place) will also decay—with the result that human beings *inexorably* descend into inhumanity and annihilate one another. The thought of Peter Singer—Princeton University's utilitarian philosopher, turned open advocate of infanticide and euthanasia—is a good example of the process Lewis sketched, and Budziszewski fills out the progression from the denial of natural law to the abolition of man in clear and easy-to-follow steps.

Following his work as chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, South African justice Richard Goldstone reflected in his address delivered at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum not long ago on why notions of justice and moral law *must not* be fluid, despite differing cultural and social values:

> The one thing that I have learned in my travels to the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda and in my own country is that where there have been egregious human rights violations that have been unaccounted for, where there has been no justice, where the victims have not received any acknowledgment, where they have been forgotten, where there has been a national amnesia, the effect is a cancer in the society. It is the reason that explains, in my respectful opinion, spirals of violence that the world has seen in the former Yugoslavia for centuries and in Rwanda for decades.

The things for which Judge Goldstone calls all require nonfluid notions of justice, a justice which inheres in natural law: the exposure of the truth of individual moral self-responsibility (as distinct from general collective guilt), the necessity of moral atrocity being recorded for history's sake (so as to underscore the enduring nature of good and evil), the acknowledgment of true victims (who as broken, terrified people stand in need of authentic justice), and the future deterrence of criminal acts (since what deters humans from doing evil is a fear of getting caught and being punished).

When J. Budziszewski calls his book *What We Can't Not Know*, he restates the obvious that must be restated in each generation: All people possess basic moral knowledge, all must be reminded of this basic knowledge, and in the end all must be held accountable for this basic knowledge. Once upon a time you could expect nearly everyone to agree. ♦

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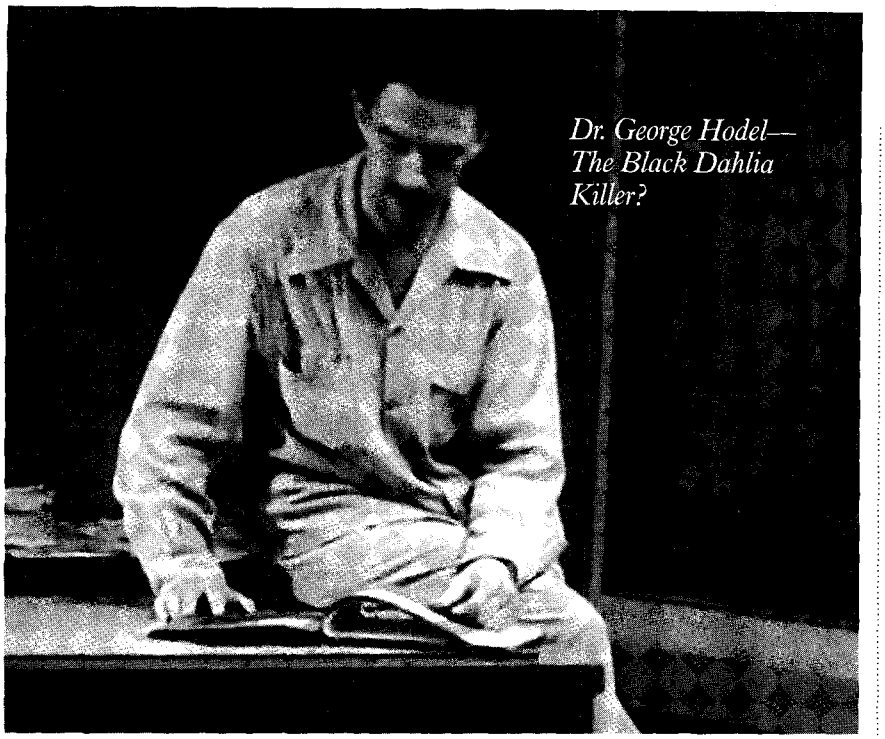

Dr. George Hodel—The Black Dahlia Killer?

Steve Hodel / Arcade

Daddy Did It

Steve Hodel finds a new suspect for the Black Dahlia's murder. **BY JON L. BREEN**

On January 15, 1947, the mutilated body of a young woman, neatly cut in half and drained of blood, was found in a vacant lot in Los Angeles. She was identified as Elizabeth Short, a twenty-two-year-old beauty from Massachusetts known to acquaintances as the "Black Dahlia." Her murder became Los Angeles's most notorious unsolved case—but now, more than fifty years later, a retired Los Angeles police detective named Steve Hodel believes he has cracked it: *His own father*, he concludes, was the Black Dahlia killer.

Black Dahlia Avenger
A Genius for Murder
by Steve Hodel
Arcade, 481 pp., $27.95

That may be true. Dr. George Hill Hodel may have been the murderer. But there's something odd whenever sons go hunting for evidence with which to attack their fathers, and in the course of writing *Black Dahlia Avenger*, Hodel has handed hostile critics too many clubs with which to beat him.

A frequent contributor of essays on mystery fiction to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *Jon L. Breen is the winner of two Edgar awards.*

Such hostile critics abound, of course, for every crime writer in the world has a theory about what happened in 1947. Beth Short, who had come to Hollywood with the customary dreams of show-business success, was friendly and attractive. She enjoyed a good time, and she often lied or embroidered the truth, inventing love affairs and even a marriage to a pilot killed in action. Her aura of mystery, her black hair, and her preference for black clothing combined with the title of a current movie (*The Blue Dahlia*, a *film-noir* classic written by Raymond Chandler) inspired her nickname. With a beautiful young victim, weird circumstances, and that evocative ready-made tag, the murder became a media sensation, fueling the circulation wars of Los Angeles's then-numerous daily newspapers—with the result that Elizabeth Short has joined Jack the Ripper, Lizzie Borden, and the princes in the Tower as a focal point of mystery fact and fiction. At least three major crime novels have been based on the case: John Gregory Dunne's highly fictionalized *True Confessions* (1977), James Ellroy's *The Black Dahlia* (1987), and Max Allan Collins's *Angel in Black* (2001), the last two using real names and sticking closer to the documented facts.

The theories advanced range from the plausible to the wildly fanciful. (The most off-the-wall suspect to date is Orson Welles, accused by Mary Pacios in the 1999 *Childhood Shadows: The Hidden Story of the Black Dahlia Murder*.) The best-regarded book-length account of the case has been *Severed* (1994, revised in 1998) by true-crime specialist John Gilmore. The best part of *Severed* is its portrait of the victim, including extensive material on her early life. Its main drawback is that Gilmore asks the reader to take his word for too much of his information. His account is based primarily on personal interviews, including those with his declared suspect, Jack Anderson Wilson, alias Grover Loving Jr., alias Arnold Smith, who was burned to death in a 1982 hotel fire before he could be interviewed by the police. Though Gilmore's solution has many advocates, it is not completely convincing.

Now, in *Black Dahlia Avenger*, Steve Hodel, who retired from the Los Angeles police in 1986, has written an intensely readable account of the case. His literary knack should be no surprise, since he came from a family of writers. His mother wrote film and radio scripts and was the first wife of writer-director John Huston. His older brother, Los Angeles broadcaster Michael Hodel, wrote mystery and science fiction. And his father Dr. George Hill Hodel counted among his accomplishments a teenage stint as a newspaper crime reporter with a knack for lurid prose.

The elder Hodel, a wealthy and socially prominent Los Angeles physician at the time of the Dahlia murder, was a child piano prodigy, a radio broadcaster, and a photographer, as well as a surgeon and psychiatrist. Sev-

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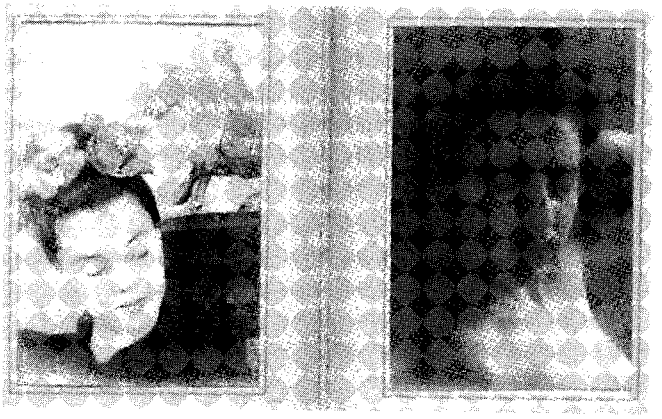
eral times married and a frequent host of wild parties, George Hodel clearly had a sinister side. Two years after the Dahlia murder, his teenage daughter Tamar, Steve's half sister, accused Dr. Hodel of incest. Acquitted in a highly publicized trial, he fled the United States, leaving his family behind, to spend most of his remaining years in Asia as a successful marketing consultant. Though he was never an easy man or a particularly good father, his often-estranged son felt enough filial love to reestablish their relationship in his last years.

After Dr. Hodel's death in 1999 at age ninety-two, Steve Hodel found in his father's album a pair of photos that piqued his curiosity. Believing both to be of the same woman—and that woman Elizabeth Short—he began to research the Dahlia case, without access to police files but using newspaper accounts and personal contacts. His investigation led him to conclude that his father not only murdered Elizabeth Short but killed several other Los Angeles women as well. Furthermore, he connects his father's alleged partner in crime, Fred Sexton, to yet more murders, committed after Dr. Hodel left the country, including the 1958 killing of Geneva Hilliker Ellroy, mother of novelist James Ellroy.

Serial killers were not as closely studied nor as well understood in the 1940s as they are today, and the lack of cooperation among law enforcement agencies made the connections between their crimes less likely to be detected. Still, many at the time believed one killer might have been responsible for several slayings of young women, including the Black Dahlia, though the Los Angeles police department finally, and somewhat inexplicably, adopted the official position that the killing was an isolated crime.

Bettmann / CORBIS. Below: Steve Hodel / Arcade.



Above: A picture known to be of Elizabeth Short, the Black Dahlia. Below: Enlargements of the tiny photographs found in Dr. George Hodel's effects and claimed by Steve Hodel also to be of Elizabeth Short.

As a police detective, Hodel knows how to build a case. Much of the circumstantial evidence he gathers is persuasive, especially the connection, bolstered by support from a graphology expert, between hand-printed messages to the police and press, ostensibly from the Black Dahlia killer, and his father's own writing. Some of them were signed "Black Dahlia Avenger" or with the abbreviation "B.D.A." Like the Jack the Ripper letters, which they often resembled, these might have been hoaxes. But a message in the same style of printing, including the letters "B.D.," was found written in lipstick on a subsequent victim, Jeanne French, whose nude and mutilated body was found, in another vacant lot, on February 10, 1947.

The achievements of Chief William Parker and Chief of Detectives Thad Brown—who turned Los Angeles's tarnished and corrupt police department into the exemplary big-city force celebrated on the radio and television program *Dragnet*—were real. But along the way, claims Hodel, they were party to one of the most infamous cover-ups in law enforcement history. Hodel contends that his father was known by Los Angeles police to be the Black Dahlia killer but escaped justice because he knew too much about local vice, including an abortion clinic run by two detectives, and police connections to organized crime.

Steve Hodel has made a solid prima facie case against his father, one that gets a stamp of approval from Los Angeles County's Head Deputy District Attorney Stephen Kay. Information revealed since the publication of Hodel's book supports the claim that his father was a prime Black Dahlia suspect. *Los Angeles Times* columnist Steve Lopez quotes the following statement by Dr. Hodel from

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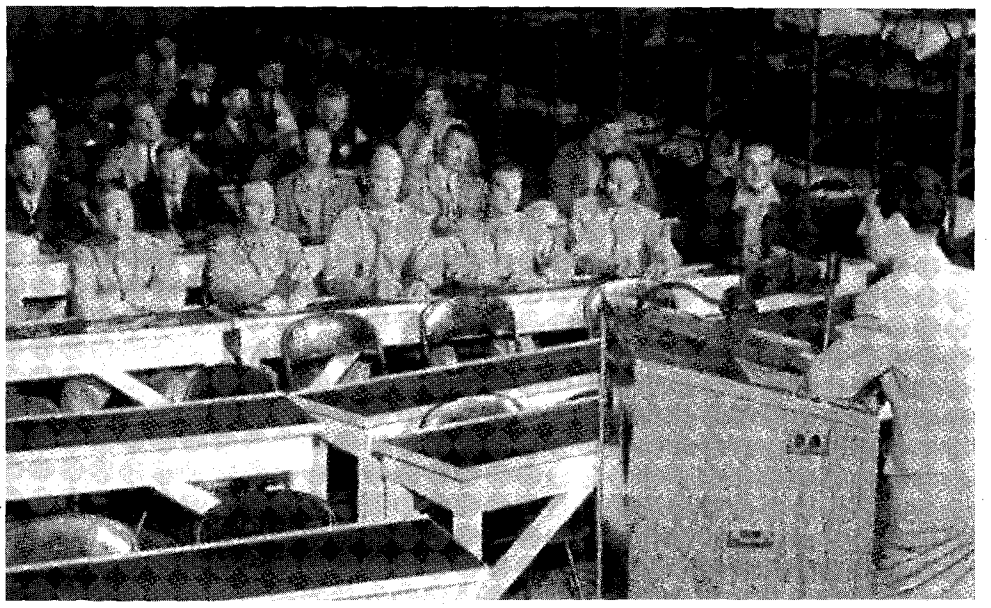

Steve Hodel / Arcade

Dr. George Hodel lecturing to the Los Angeles police academy in the 1940s.

wiretaps of his phone: "Supposin' I did kill the Black Dahlia. They couldn't prove it now. They can't talk to my secretary, because she's dead."

But there are still problems with the account in *Black Dahlia Avenger*. In accusing a parent of the crime, Hodel joins a bizarre subgenre already occupied by the generally derided *Daddy Was the Black Dahlia Killer* (1995), in which Janice Knowlton (assisted by writing pro Mike Newton) blamed her father for the crime—by relying on repressed memories. Some of the cynical ridicule vented on Knowlton has spilled over onto Hodel, and the spectacle of a son pinning such heinous crimes on his own father, who is both beyond earthly justice and unable to defend himself, invites questions of morbid psychology, familial disloyalty, exploitation, insensitivity, and greed.

But Hodel doesn't show such morbid tendencies in other ways. He reveals a respectful attitude to Elizabeth Short in his refusal to depict her as a prostitute or to reproduce graphic post-mortem photos, and he is openly disgusted with Will Fowler's trivializing of a torture murder as "an unopened present" and "a wondrous thing" in his 1991 memoir *Reporters*. In accusing his father, Steve Hodel is also salvaging the reputation of his half-sister, who at the time of the incest trial was excoriated by Dr. Hodel as a pathological liar, a charge believed even by her own family. Indeed, Tamar Hodel's witness-stand statement that her father killed the Black Dahlia was a factor in the jury's disbelief.

Hodel generally draws a clear distinction between fact and conjecture, though his opening chapter follows the "thoughts" of the victim, a bad sign in an ostensibly factual account. Meanwhile, he allows himself a strange venture into the life of painter and photographer Man Ray, who lived in Los Angeles at the time of the crimes and reportedly was a close friend of Dr. Hodel. Steve Hodel contends that his father posed the body of the Black Dahlia in homage to some of Man Ray's artistic work and their shared enthusiasm for the Marquis de Sade. The claim is not convincing and has the unfortunate effect of making Man Ray appear almost a co-conspirator.

But the most serious problem with *Black Dahlia Avenger* is that the first link in Hodel's chain of evidence is the weakest. The book's critics have justifiably assailed its author's confident identification of the photographs in his father's album. It's not clear that they even depict the *same* woman, let alone that the woman is Elizabeth Short. Hodel claims he reached his conclusion after examining numerous photos of Short on the Internet, but apart from the dust jacket, his book presents no images of Short for comparison.

Hodel obviously is not required to make an iron clad case connecting his father and Fred Sexton to every crime mentioned in his book. Still, reasoning that is farfetched or obviously erroneous casts doubt on his main case. For example, Hodel compares one of his father's typewritten letters to one purportedly from the killer of Georgette Bauerdorf, victim of a 1944 bathtub murder. Hodel assumes that using a double hyphen to represent an em dash is somehow unusual. On the contrary, it is standard. Word-processing programs do it automatically.

Some of Hodel's most outspoken critics owe allegiance to John Gilmore—particularly the novelist Gary Indiana, who reviewed Hodel's book dismissively for the *Los Angeles Times* after contributing a glowing cover blurb to Gilmore's *Severed*. Gilmore himself has been among those quoted as disputing Hodel's photo identification. His own book has more pictures of Short for comparison, including a particularly gruesome post-mortem head shot—and no, Gilmore's selections look no more like the pictures in Dr. Hodel's album than does the picture of Short on Steve Hodel's dust jacket.

So what's the final verdict on *Black Dahlia Avenger*? Its accounts of cover-ups and civic corruption are all too believable, and much of the circumstantial evidence it presents against George Hodel is persuasive. Still, the more fanciful speculations, along with that dubious first step, taint its authority. Has Steve Hodel solved the case? I think so, but he has some tidying up to do for the paperback edition. Perhaps the next Dahlia book should assess all the competing theories—written by someone without a dramatic new suspect to advance. But that approach doesn't make for bestsellers. ♦

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"You smell like old comic books."

What Derrida Is Saying

Gerald Owen, writing in Canada's *National Post*, recently reminded us that back in May a major intellectual event took place—and it went nearly unnoticed outside Europe. It was the merging of the modern with the postmodern, in which a philosophical movement that began as a rebellion against modernism was finally absorbed back into modernism.

The occasion was a statement cosigned by Jürgen Habermas, high priest of the Frankfurt school of modern philosophy, and Jacques Derrida, dean of the postmodernists. Published in both the German *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the French *Libération*, it argues that Europe needs to take its place as the global counterweight to the United States—for the highest moral and metaphysical reasons. There wouldn't have been all those problems with England before the war with Iraq if Europe had a transnational government powerful enough to squash someone like Tony Blair, and Europe needs such a government to halt American religious fanaticism: "In our latitudes, it would be hard to imagine a president who begins his daily official duties with a public prayer and links his important political decisions with a divine mission."

There was a time when some of the postmodernists seemed, if not right, then at least amusing. All their silly jargon about the impotence of phallocentric rationality and the need to deconstruct the Eurocentric logos sawed against much of the old liberal project, and it was fun to see the liberals squirm while the postmodernists deconstructed them—drowning modernity in the same scorn that modernity had once poured on premodern times.

Quite how Derrida, a founding father of anti-Eurocentrism, can now embrace a European world-power is a little hard to grasp, but it turns out that leftist modern philosophy is subject to ridicule only while that philosophy is winning. When the world looks as though it might not actually be turning into a global Sweden—with socialist economics, high secularism, and sexual libertarianism all triumphant—the postmodernists scurry back into the leftist fold. Anything, even Habermas, is better than the United States.

Habermas and Derrida also combined for a set of interviews in October 2001, recently published in a book called *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*. Unconscious self-revelation is always fun, and here's Derrida on the terror attacks against the United States on September 11:

> You are inviting me to speak here by recalling, as if in quotation marks, a date or a dating that has taken over our public space and our private lives.... "Something" took place, we have the feeling of not having seen it coming, and certain consequences undeniably follow upon the "thing."
>
> But this very thing, the place and meaning of this "event," remains ineffable, like an intuition without concept, like a unicity with no generality on the horizon or with no horizon at all, out of range for a language that admits its powerlessness and so is reduced to pronouncing mechanically a date, repeating it endlessly, as a kind of ritual incantation, a conjuring poem, a journalistic litany or rhetorical refrain that admits to not knowing what it's talking about.
>
> We do not in fact know what we are saying or naming in this way: September 11, *le 11 septembre*, September 11. The brevity of the appellation (September 11, 9/11) stems not only from an economic or rhetorical necessity. The telegram of this metonymy—a name, a number—points out the unqualifiable by recognizing that we do not recognize or even cognize that we do not yet know how to qualify, that we do not know what we are talking about.

There is much more to this lovely passage than we've quoted here. But the line "we do not yet know what we are talking about" will remain as an epitaph for Jacques Derrida, the one line we will remember from him long after he's gone. ♦

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* * *

World-Wide

■ **THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH released its first hymn celebrating the election of Bishop V. Gene Robinson.**

Sung to the tune of the Simon and Garfunkel hit "Mrs. Robinson," the hymn will be introduced this Sunday in thousands of parishes across the nation.

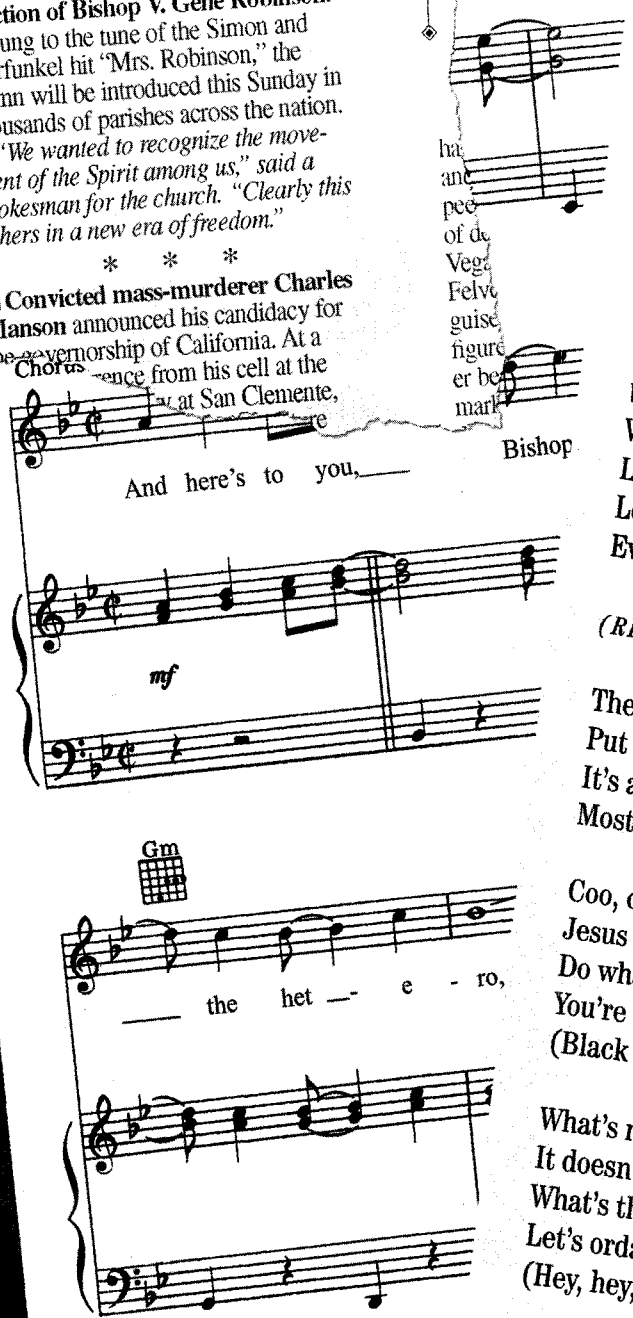
"We wanted to recognize the movement of the Spirit among us," said a spokesman for the church. "Clearly this ushers in a new era of freedom."

* * *

■ **Convicted mass-murderer Charles Manson** announced his candidacy for the governorship of California. At a ...ence from his cell at the ...at San Clemente, ...re

Bishop Robinson

With Apologies To
PAUL SIMON



BISHOP ROBINSON

CHORUS:

And here's to you, Bishop Robinson,
Jesus don't just love the hetero, (Wo, wo, wo)
God bless you, please, Bishop Robinson,
Heaven holds a place for those who stray,
(I'm okay, you're okay).

VERSE:

We'd like to share a little bit about you from our files
Like how you left your girls and wife.
Looked around and found that you'd prefer to be with guys,
Ever since you've had a boyfriend in your life.

(REPEAT CHORUS)

The Bible's in a hiding place where no one ever goes,
Put it in your pantry with your cupcakes,
It's a little secret book that no one ever reads,
Most of all, you've got to hide it from the kids.

Coo, coo, ca-choo, Bishop Robinson
Jesus doesn't care which way you go, (Wo, wo, wo)
Do what you please, Bishop Robinson,
You're the master of your ship today,
(Black and white, turn to gray).

What's next for th' Episcopalians?
It doesn't really matter what we do, (Woo, woo, woo).
What's that you say, Bishop Robinson?
Let's ordain some Muslim priests today,
(Hey, hey, hey—it's okay).

The Church Hymnal Corporation
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What Harry Potter Can Teach the Textbook Industry

Diane Ravitch is a research professor, New York University; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

As the world knows, the latest installment in the Harry Potter series sold five million copies on the first day it was available. Many thousands (or millions) of American children stood in line for hours to buy the book.

Here's the rub: the same children complain incessantly that their textbooks are boring. Whereas they hunger to get a Harry Potter book of nearly nine hundred pages, they can barely tolerate the equally large books that are assigned in school.

What does Harry Potter have that the textbooks don't?

Today's textbooks represent a major achievement in visual design. They glitter with charts, photographs, drawings, and pedagogical advice to the reader. But they are boring.

While researching a book about textbooks, I asked a major publisher why the textbooks are so heavy with graphics. He said, "American kids don't like to read anymore. They are so accustomed to watching television and the Internet that a book can't hold their attention without lots of visual stimuli."

The success of the Harry Potter series shows that this assumption is wrong. American youngsters will read books that are exciting and well written, regardless of their graphics. They devour the Potter books because author J. K. Rowling has infused them with classic themes drawn from legend and myth, as well as biblical imagery. Like J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* books, Rowling's books resonate with suspense, mystery, intrigue, and showdowns between the forces of good and evil.

In contrast to the gripping tales told by Rowling and Tolkien, our history textbooks skim lightly above the surface of events, ignoring the fact that history is first of all a story. The history books excel at mentioning vast numbers of events, people, and ideas and compressing them into short summaries of a page or two. The drama of history and biography is sacrificed to the imperative of "covering" everything in a single volume. **Clashes of good and evil have been banished, replaced by pedestrian prose and thumbnail sketches.**

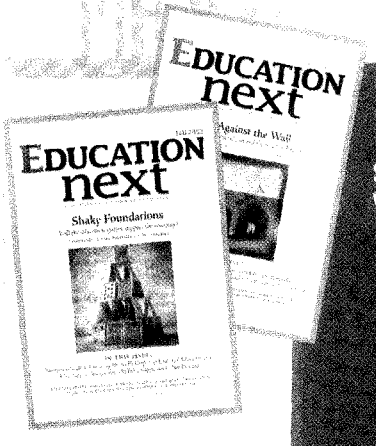
Similarly, our reading and literature books have achieved the heights of banality. Those who assemble them are careful to weed out controversial themes, anything that might upset pressure groups from left and right. They aim not to engage students' imagination but to bolster their self-esteem. Demographic correctness—the right percentage of authors and characters from every possible segment of society—has become more important than literary excellence.

Harry Potter has triumphed because his author understands the power of story. If the story is good enough, children will take a flashlight to bed so they can keep reading after the lights are out. Unlike textbook publishers, who must screen everything they print to avoid giving offense, she is free to write about a dysfunctional family, about the moral necessity to confront evil, and about how bad things happen to good people.

There is something terribly wrong with the political process that dulls the materials in our classrooms. Our children quite rightly reject writing that has been processed and homogenized by scores of textbook committees.

— *Diane Ravitch*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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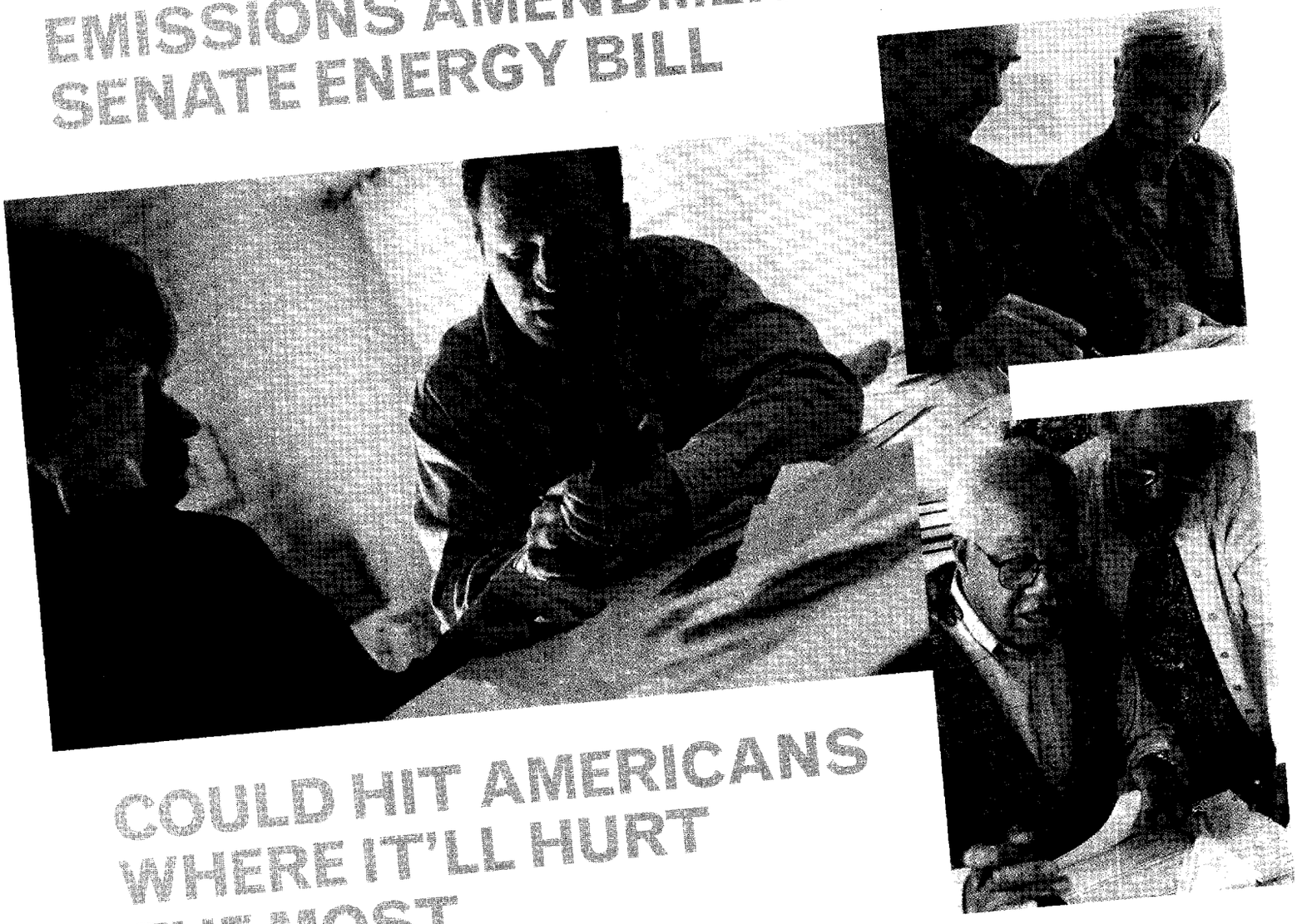
RPS AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AMENDMENTS TO THE SENATE ENERGY BILL



COULD HIT AMERICANS WHERE IT'LL HURT THE MOST.

Right in the family budget. The Senate should reject costly and unnecessary amendments to S.14 — the Energy Policy Act of 2003. Mandates on greenhouse gas emissions and Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) for electricity will lead to higher energy prices for consumers.

Instead of these **one-size-fits-all federal mandates** that will harm our economy, the Senate should stay with a proven strategy of promoting renewable energy through incentives and funding for research and development allowing states to develop programs to meet their individual needs. And, the Senate should support voluntary programs to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. America doesn't need RPS and greenhouse gas emissions mandates, and Americans don't need higher energy costs.

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